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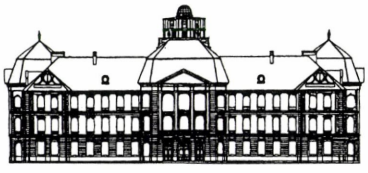

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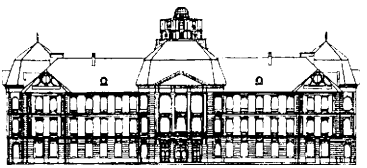

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CONTENTS

STUDIES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The Department of American Studies at Eszterházy Károly College is pleased to present Volume VIII of the Eger Journal of American Studies.

The *Eger Journal of American Studies* is the first scholarly journal published in Hungary devoted solely to the publication of articles investigating and exploring various aspects of American Culture. We intend to cover all major and minor areas of interest ranging from American literature, history, and society to language, popular culture, bibliography etc.

The journal welcomes original articles, essays, and book reviews in English by scholars in Hungary and abroad.

The *Eger Journal of American Studies* is published annually by Eszterházy Károly College.

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IN MEMORIAM PÉTER EGRI

(1932–2002)

According to the original plan the editor intended the present volume of Eger Journal of American Studies for Péter Egri to congratulate him and to celebrate the eminent scholar, the distinguished professor, the highly honored teacher and master, and his outstanding lifework on his 70th birthday. Fate frustrated our intention. He was in Eger on his last birthday but one having the keynote address at HUSSE 5 conference, lecturing on Joyce and Cage—literature and music—his beloved world of scholarship. As always, he, with his crystal-clear sound, accurate accent, elaborate presentation, the sound of music of his piano-playing, carried his hearers with him. When I was telling about his commemorative volume, he was happy. But soon bad news became known about his failing health and left us unnoticed. Thus the happy-birthday tribute turned into a memorial tribute.

Péter Egri, professor of English and American literature, head of the English departments at Kossuth Lajos University, Debrecen, and Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, was a nationally and internationally acknowledged expert on British, American and European literature, music, painting, and genre theory. He was a scholar of comparative literary and cultural studies whose major contribution was in the advancement of comparative methodology. His intertextual and cultural readings and writings in the context of European and Anglo-American culture opened up new perspectives. He was a respected representative of Hungarian culture and scholarship abroad, a visiting professor and researcher at the most famous American and English universities, and an inspiring teacher at home under whose supervision many generations of Hungarian scholars in English Studies wrote their MA and PhD theses. As a tutor, colleague, and friend he never forced his opinion on others, but listened attentively, trying to understand, convince, and help.

His outstanding achievements and dedication toward exemplary goals were among the best when he was first awarded the most prestigious honor in English and American studies, the Országh László Award and other admittedly the highest Hungarian honors in his professional field, the Hungarian Academy's Award and the Szent-Györgyi Albert Prize.

We pay a tribute of our respect and admiration to Péter Egri, a professor, and a scholar who has reached an unsurpassed level of excellence and achievement. A leading spirit who has gone far beyond the standard obligations to become a driving power in shaping our literary scholarship, criticism, and culture.

Colleagues, students, friends, and all those who knew and loved him will remember and miss his teaching, lectures and seminars, his brilliant talent and thorough knowledge, his subtle and elegant use of language, his critical style and sharp logic of argumentation, his sparkling wit and sense of humor, his polite manners and personality.

Lehel Vadon

MÁRIA KURDI

"HOLD LIKE RICH GARNERS THE FULL-RIPEN'D GRAIN" ON THE SCHOLARLY HERITAGE OF PÉTER EGRI (1932–2002)

Introduction

The late Professor Péter Egri's contribution to literary scholarship, laid down in sixteen books, some edited volumes and nearly three hundred studies and shorter writings published in Hungary and in several other countries, defies convenient categorization. He belonged to the by our time fast decreasing number of scholars whose range of interests proved to be extremely wide and far-reaching, embracing aspects of Hungarian, English, American, Irish, French, German, Russian, Norwegian and Spanish literature, genre theory, music, painting and sculpture. Therefore, Egri was both an Anglicist and an Americanist, and even more: "scholar of comparative literary and cultural studies" appears to be the most appropriate description of his status in view of the scope of his achievement. The opening of his career as literary historian and critic already demonstrated this variety: after he completed his university doctor's degree dissertation on the poetry of Attila József in 1959, in the following years up to 1966 he probed into the works of writers as diverse as Mark Twain, Aldous Huxley, Henrik Ibsen, G. B. Shaw, James Joyce, Tibor Déry, and Anton P. Chekhov in articles which appeared in journals and collections. 1967 saw the publication of his first two books, on notably different subjects. One under the title *Hemingway* is a slender volume which surveys the fiction of the American writer with a special focus on the genetic and generic connections between the

novelistic and the short story forms and the interaction of realism and naturalism. The other book, titled *James Joyce és Thomas Mann: Dekadencia és modernség* (James Joyce and Thomas Mann: Decadence and Modernity) provides detailed comparisons of the two outstanding writers' respective works in the context of the both diverse and diverging ambitions of modernism.

From the beginning of his career, the incentive to view genres and works in relation to each other, while also interrogating them against certain models, paradigms, and their representative artistic manifestations, has established its own creative tradition in Egri's scholarly activity. In an interview conducted with him on the occasion of his 70th birthday in Janaury 2002, he outlined a periodization of his whole ouevre himself, based on the nature and corollary of the issues he was intrigued by at the time of writing his major book-length studies (Kurdi 130–31). According to this thoughtful self-assessment and the testimony of Egri's works themselves, the roughly four decades of his activity as literary historian and critic can be divided into four periods. None of these, however, is clearly independent from the others, they are linked by acts of developing, refocusing and expanding the issues initially problematized. Egri's scholarly oeuvre is a firm construction that was gradually rising higher while growing in breadth and strength during his career. The roads and paths taken by his inquisitive scholarship can be seen as criss-crossing each other while all leading towards the "rich garners," to borrow from the lyrical vocabulary of John Keats' sonnet "When I Have Fears" (152), which now store the products of thought and ambitious inquiry in the form of individual essays, collections and books.

Interrogating Modernism

During the frist period, which fell between 1959 and 1972, Egri claimed to have been interested in what ways and by what means of representation literary works addressed the crucial, often dissonant experiences of the twentieth century, so that they not just break with, but also transcend and renew tradition. As he argued, it was the synthetizing achievement of Béla Bartók's modernist music that provided some kind of model for him to pinpoint the possibility of this delicate balance in the domain of literature (Kurdi 130). Considered in this light, the similarity of the first two books is unmistakable: they

discuss shifts in the writing of the three authors, comparing as well as contrasting their varied artistic responses to the threatening outside world in terms of narrative structure and discourse. Both books have remained milestones in Hungarian scholarship, reviewed and cited by several Hungarian critics. *James Joyce és Thomas Mann* had Tibor Szobotka, the translator of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* into Hungarian among its first reviewers. In Szobotka's words, the book is "valuable both as a Joyce monograph and as a work [that] never fails to grasp the important connections, and sees all phenomena in the multiplied relation and reflection of parallel, precedent and consequence" (287). Closer to our time, in his analysis of Hemingway's *Fiesta* Zoltán Abádi Nagy refers to the significant artistic links between that novel and the preceding volume of short stories as first propounded by Egri's book on the writer (195).

The individual author and work renewing tradition is, of course, an idea discussed in T. S. Eliot's essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), which Egri paid particular attention to already in his first writing on the poet, a contribution to the collection *Az angol irodalom a huszadik században* (English Literature in the Twentieth Century) (1970). Eliot's was another modernist achievement he could not possibly ignore in his dedicated investigation of how artists represented chaos and loss as aspects of twentieth century experience, and completed a further paper titled "T. S. Eliot's Aesthetics" for the 1974 issue of *Hungarian Studies in English* published by the Debrecen English Department. Continuing the same line of inquiry, in 1981 Egri selected and edited a collection of Eliot's essays in Hungarian, to which he wrote an introduction that expounds the nature of the various intellectual challenges demonstrated by the writer. Years later, in "Reflections on T. S. Eliot's *Vers Libre*," an article appearing in a volume of centenary essays published in England Egri contended that "The crucial problem of genre theory [...] is of a complex nature and therefore requires a complex approach. It is a remarkable thing that two such different authors as T. S. Eliot and G. Lukács show a conspicuous point of contact in tackling the problem" (164). This statement but highlights, in retrospect, that the marxist theoretical perspective characteristic of the early period of Egri's scholarship was by no means a narrowly understood and rigidly

applied set of critical tools and conventions, but kept on enriching itself, drawing from the thoughts of definitely non-marxist systems as well. Egri's studies of Eliot are also widely cited, for instance in the discussion of the kaleidoscopic method and non-linear progression underlying the structure of *The Waste Land*, which forms a seminal chapter of the 1986 *Tradition and Innovation in American Free Verse: Whitman to Duncan*, written by Enikő Bollobás (173).

The books coming from Egri's pen in the latter part of his first creative period broadened the scope of scrutiny by examining further representatives and manifestations of twentieth century fiction. *Álom, látomás, valóság* (Dream, Vision, Reality) (1969) was the first in the line, which focuses on particular strategies of the modernizing tendency in a remarkable variety of major European novelists' works, expanding and complicating the analytical arsenal by parallels from the domain of music, the compositions of Benjamin Britten for instance. In one of the writer giants, Marcel Proust, Egri discovered yet another exemplary innovator of the novel's technique, whose influence on a range of later practitioners of the genre he found it both worthwhile and fruitful to take account of. Thus Proust, Tibor Déry and Jorges Semprun are treated together in the volume he published in French in 1969, under the title *Survie et réinterprétation de la forme proustienne*. His closely following 1970 book focuses on Déry alone, discussing aspects of the Hungarian author's modernity he found not only unique but also unorthodox in the context of mid-twentieth century Hungarian literary phenomena which were restricted by politically governed critical norms and expectations.

Avantgardism and Modernity appeared in 1972, as a kind of assessment of the several year-long, complex inquiry into what constitutes the modern, reaching back to the comparison of respective works by Joyce and Mann and the idea that it was the latter of the two who achieved modernity in its true essence. But isn't this an evidently dated view, we are inclined to ask thirty years later, when Joyce has become acclaimed as a leading master of modern prose everywhere in the world. In his contribution to " 'Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade': A Discussion Panel in Memory of Péter Egri" at the HUSSE 6 Conference in Debrecen, 2003, Aladár Sarbu gave a succinct summary of what remains as the lasting value of Egri's book:

> Few people would today accept a comparative analysis of Joyce and Mann the upshot of which is that Mann succeeded where Joyce failed. We would say, rather, that Joyce succeeded where Mann succeeded, only they succeeded in different ways. Still, in more senses than one, *Avantgardism and Modernity* is an exemplary book: it rests on sound scholarship, presents its case in a lucid and lively manner, and most of all, because even if you do not always agree with the lessons it draws you cannot but acknowledge the perspicacity and the insight with which it explores the ways in which avantgard techniques operate in fiction. The most eloquent proof of this latter is that Professor Egri's analysis of stylistic variety in "Circe" is now part and parcel of any aspiring Joyce-scholar's education.

Though *Avantgardism and Modernity* can be regarded as a closure to the first period, the difference of the modernist narrative from its realist predecessors and also from its postmodern followers, at least in the case of Joyce, continued to be a challenge in some of Egri's later writings. In the 1973 essay "Natura Naturans: an Approach to the Poetic Reflection of Reality. The Aspect of Poetry in the 'Proteus' Episode of James Joyce's *Ulysses*," the scholar analyzes the poetic language of Joyce's modernist fiction as exemplified in the selected episode. "A Portrait of the Artist as a Caricaturist: Picasso, Joyce, Britten," first published in the journal *Comparative Literature Studies* in 1982, draws a parallel between different art works to chart strategies of parody and caricature. The part on Joyce probes into the double-edged nature of the "Oxen of the Sun" chapter of *Ulysses* as it keeps an ironic distance from both its source, Homer's epic, and the 19th century style of Charles Dickens. According to Egri, some elements of Chapter LIII of *David Copperfield* become playfully displaced and thoroughly caricatured in the Joycean text (107–09). Extending his comments on the shift between forms and styles further, in a 2001 essay under the title "(Per)chance: Joyce and Cage" Egri discusses how John Cage's postmodern composition *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* (1961), which adapts a passage from page 556 of *Finnegans Wake*, increases the musical quality of Joyce's modernist text. The rhythmic ambiguities of the composer's work, achieved through the act of transposing Joyce's linguistic bravura, were even demonstrated by Egri to his professional audience when he was playing some of the music on the piano as an accompaniment to

his key-note lecture, the first version of the later essay, at the HUSSE 5 Conference in Eger, 2001.

There are certain hidden gems of Egri's scholarly heritage which did not find their way into any of the books for some reason and remained within the respective bounds of relatively isolated essays, participating in the process of the ongoing inquiry established by his work nonetheless. The 1980 article titled "The Genetic and Generic Aspects of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*" unmistakably joins itself to the first period, by contending that the novel under inspection displays a "[...] many-faceted complex pattern [that] sheds explanatory light on the fermenting trends in American fiction at the close of the century, a period which gave birth to the American novel" (333). In a way the essay is a further extension of the research producing the book which discusses the modernist aspects of Hemingway's narrative form and discourse, since it critically engages with the cross-fertilization of genres as well as subgenres. As clarified by Egri's line of argument, the integration of naturalistic, impressionistic, symbolistic, and potentially expressionistic-surrealistic layers into the realism characteristic of Crane's method of writing is inseparable from the lyrical and dramatic modes enriching the fictional to enhance the portrayal of changing moods and conflicting perspectives.

Addressing the Nature of Poetry and the Poetic

The first period having focused on modernism chiefly in fiction, in the second one Egri's new direction was to address the nature of poetry, departing from and arguing with the relevant ideas of György Lukács and Christopher Caudwell. *A költészet valósága: líra és lirizálódás* (The Reality of Poetry: The Lyrical and Lyricization) is the title given to the 1975 book dedicated to the memory of György Lukács, Egri's eminent teacher and master. A theoretically framed volume, it seems to have evolved and become synthesized from the lectures the author gave about varios English poets and poetic genres to his students at Lajos Kossuth University, Debrecen during the preceding years. The most detailed and thorough review of *A költészet valósága* was written by Ágnes Péter. Published in *Filológiai Közlöny* (Philological Review), her evaluation of the book points out that it engages with virtualy all the significant questions having been raised

in the history of aesthetic speculation (110). While this in itself is a clear indication of the depth of the study, the reviewer finds that Egri discusses and uses the concept of *natura naturans*, which dates back to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, but does not redefine or develop it any further (109). Presumably not intending to set an aim of such proportions for his work, he does, however, examine the implications of the concept through the analyses of literary works written by authors of several countries ranging from Renaissance to modernism.

Due to its nature, and to Egri's deep-rooted interest as well as inspired education in music, *A költészet valósága* treats the manifold subject and its ramifications by identifying and utilizing the subtle parallels and affinities between poetry and music. The third chapter is remarkable for following the journey of the sonnet in English from Shakespeare and John Donne to William Wordsworth and Elizabeth Barrett Browning through the Metaphysical poets and John Milton. Introduced to generic transformations from Renaissance plasticity to emotional integration through contrapuntal tension, here the reader is presented with a collection of both informed and sensitive close-readings of individual sonnets, whose analyses reveal their respective stylistic variations on this particular lyrical form. Addressing Wordsworth's "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802," Egri maintains that it clearly distinguishes itself from the Petrarchan tradition. He accounts for the powerful emotional paradox at the heart of the sonnet as an effect produced by the pictorial description of the impression that the city wears the "beauty of the morning" and is "silent and bare" at the same time (139–41).

The reader finds that Egri's *A költészet valósága*, because of its analytical scope and use of a functional method, can boast of a radiating impact on many of the critic's later studies, especially those dealing with Shakespeare. "Whose Immortality Is It Anyway? The Hungarian Translations of Shakespeare's Sonnet 18," an essay first published in volume 17 of the *Shakespeare Yearbook* series in 1996, harks back to, draws from and relies on the observations concerning the development of poetic genres in the much earlier book. Doing so, the essay offers a both detailed and exciting comparative study of fifteen attempts to render Sonnet 18 into Hungarian, demonstrating through this representative series also the shifting ideas and ideals

which underpinned and shaped the theory and practice of translating poetry in nineteenth- and twentieth century Hungary. Completing the survey, "Whose Immortality Is It Anyway?" evaluates Dezső Mészöly's outstanding translation from 1990 in relation to the progress of Shakespeare's lyrical art itself, as a "revitalization, reinterpretation, and modernization of traditional translations [...] in tune with the prosodic context of Shakespeare's own achievement in integrating, rejecting, rejuvenating, and recasting traditional ways of composing sonnets" (33–34).

A költészet valósága extends its inquiry also to the ways how fiction and drama may become imbued with the lyrical. In this respect, Egri's examples range from the intricate poetic structures he discovers in the "Proteus" episode of *Ulysses* to the use of symbols and visions in especially the early plays of Eugene O'Neill. In his 1984 book about the ontology of drama discussed in comparison with that of other genres, drama theorist Tamás Bécsy pays credit to these observations (222, 312). The discussion of O'Neill's plays in a comprehensive book about poetry like *A költészet valósága* is, offers certainly not a strange interlude before the third period of Egri's scholarly work with drama in its centre, which was announced by the 1983 book titled *Törésvonalak: drámai irányok az európai századfordulón* (Faultlines: Dramatic Trends at the Turn of the Century in Europe). Researching O'Neill, Egri realized, the route first had to lead back to the theatres of Europe, to consider the roots of the American playwright whose intimate knowledge of his exemplary international predecessors is indispensable for a deeper understanding of his own work. Systematically, in *Törésvonalak* as well as in some corresponding essays, Egri constructed a both manysided and broad picture of the changes in theatre and the renewed playwriting practice that flourished across different countries and nations and inspired O'Neill later. Oscar Wilde comes first and Maxim Gorky closes the line in the survey of authors whose dramaturgical innovations within realism, symbolism, aestheticism, naturalism and symbolism Egri examines as milestones of the revolution taking place in the modern European theatre between the politically charged dates of 1871 and 1917.

A synthesizing book like *Törésvonalak* hardly ever comes to light without omissions as far as the list of analyzed writers is concerned,

and these may seem to be important ones on occasion. In this particular case John Millington Synge is such a missing author. His absence is all the more surprizing as William Butler Yeats, who made less direct impact on contemporary Irish drama than Synge, receives a comparatively lengthy treatment in the volume, despite the fact that a considerable bulk of his plays was written after 1917, beyond which date the book does not reach. The chapter on Yeats, however, has its own specific value in that it constitutes the first interpretative discussion of the poet-playwright's experimental dramatic *oeuvre* in Hungary. Referring to the late Ibsen as parallel as well as potential influence, Egri emphasizes the symbolism inherent in Yeats's work for the theatre. Thus a ground-breaking essay in its own right, it was soon followed by Csilla Bertha's comprehensive monographic study of Yeats the playwright, in the introductory chapter of which she quotes Egri's description of the Irish author as the writer of the "drama of possibility" in a future-oriented period characterized by the national and cultural revival of his native country (28).

Another of Egri's isolated essays from 1987, called "Synge and O'Neill: Inspiration and Influence," may serve to compensate for the absence of Synge from the book mapping the history of modern European drama. Claiming that during their first tour of the United States in 1911 the Abbey Players presented works by Synge, Yeats, Augusta Gregory, T. C. Murray and Lennox Robinson, it describes how O'Neill, at that time a young man cherishing dreams of writing for the theatre, attended all of those performances, and started his own playwriting career with Synge as a haunting presence behind the works of especially his early period. According to Egri's summary, the apparent influence can be detected "from typological convergence to parallels of theme, treatment, mood and motif," which constitute "so many good reasons to see the two dramatists' works in correlation" (268). Reading this well justified argument, one is invited to add that later in the twentieth century the direction of inspiration/influence between the drama of the two nations seems to have changed: a number of contemporary Irish playwrights engage in a refreshing dialogue with O'Neill, Tennessee Wiliams, Arthur Miller, Sam Shepard and David Mamet.

The concluding chapter of *Törésvonalak* proves to be a thought-provoking commentary on and intervention in contemporary Hungarian critical debates about the drama, with Tamás Bécsy's theory of identifying the "situation" as a key-element of the genre (*Drámamo-dellek* 33–50) in the centre of its attention. Egri stresses the view that the "situation" can be found too general a category for the purpose of theorizing drama, as it is also present in musical genres like the fugue and the sonata. Rather than enhance the status of one undoubtedly important element, he suggests, referring to what he calls György Lukács's "hidden drama theory" (432), that the concept of conflict should be broadened to encompass the latent tension and opposition between characters in plays where there may be no open clash of antithetical intensions or ambitions. As expected, Egri's thoughts in the conclusion generated a continuation of the theoretical debates. Bécsy responded in a review of the book, which misses a more detailed elaboration of a broad and flexible concept of conflict to give shape to the ideas of Lukács. At the same time, he identified the value and originality of the book by pointing out that its author analyzes the generic development of modern drama in relation to style (Bécsy, "A műfaj: stílus" 1575).

Challenges of the Drama

Egri's many-sided inquiry into modern drama was leading toward and converging into his in-depth study of one giant playwright, Eugene O'Neill's work. By the 1980s he had become an internationally known O'Neill scholar, commissioned to contribute to important and influential collections in the field, which came out in the United States, Canada, Germany and Japan. His work is quoted, for instance, in Virginia Floyd's extended assessment of the palywright's career (52). The same decade saw the publication of three books on O'Neill by Egri, primarily interested in the role of form articulating the American experience as it influenced the playwright's imagination. 1986 was hallmarked by completing the comparative analysis titled *Chekhov and O'Neill: The Uses of the Short Story in Chekhov's and O'Neill's Plays*, which addresses the interaction between short story and drama in respective works of the two playwrights. Chekhov's apparent influence on O'Neill forms the starting point to placing generic questions, again, in the centre of the

book. The author looks at several of the two writers' short stories to trace how they anticipate the short plays, while the short-story-like narrative and dramatic units in some of the full-length plays of both oeuvres are identified as important structural principles contributing to what Egri calls, justifiably, the "mosaic design" (68).

While a fundamentally comparative study in its own right, *Chekhov and O'Neill* suceeded in achieving what *A költészet valósága* did not yet do: it developed an original theoretical conception and framework for an illustrated scrutiny of the working of the drama and the dramatic. Probably Egri's best book, its good reception and informed appreciation in Hungarian professional circles and also abroad were testified by the great number of reviews dedicated to it in journals and various other forums. Sampling these, the one from the pen of Frederick C. Wilkins contributed to *The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter* appears to be most thorough and comprehensive in both its synopsis and appraisal. The American O'Neill scholar writes:

> This is a rich and rewarding book, and if I begin with the comment that it is misrepresented by its title, I do so only to emphasize that Professor Egri's study extends considerably beyond its officially announced confines. [...] there are frequent and fruitful digressions into the relations between O'Neill's work and that of other writers as well, especially Conrad, Gorky, Synge and Ibsen; and the author's deep familiarity with the whole course of social and cultural history permits him to broaden his canvas periodically and show the origins and intricate evolution of the literary genres he is discussing [...]. *Chekhov and O'Neill* is not an easy book, either to read or to summarize. It defies immediate comprehension or glib recital. But the careful reader will, I know, share my gratitude to Professor Egri for adding a major volume to the O'Neill bookshelf. (32, 34)

Another reviewer, Joyce Flynn for *Irish Literary Supplement* is similarly respectful of the analytical achievement of the book. Characteristically, he finds it appropriate to contextualize his comments by referring to Chekhov's popularity with Irish writers, especially playwrights. Regarding details he continues: "[...] the resemblances Egri highlights are persuasive: the most useful to teachers of O'Neill's drama being the allusions to Chekhov's *The Seagull* and the insight into Edmund's self-concept as an artist in his speeches late in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*" (30).

The next book of Egri's on O'Neill, *The Birth of American Tragedy* from 1988 was written with the intention of introducing mainly university students to the evolution of the drama in America, including a critical summary of the various theories why the genre had come of age so relatively late there. Beginning to map its national history, the analysis of the unmistakably derivative but heroically accomplished pioneer work *The Prince of Parthia* (1759) by Thomas Godfrey in the first chapter qualifies as exceptional in that it revives a long-forgotten work for scholarship. On the other hand, this part of the book turns out to have a strategic function as well, it becomes the basis of further investigations and conclusions: Egri establishes a delicate balance of respect for something starting with *Parthia* though obviously still in the shadow of Shakespeare, and the necessary critique of this being not quite the right thing yet. The story of the difficult birth of the genre in America, however, leads from origins to maturity as well as originality: the last chapter in the book discusses O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, appreciating "the fusion of the epic, lyric and tragic" within the drama. Lending a firm structure to the analysis Egri distinguishes four types of conflict as they unfold among the characters, which affect the artistic approach and entail variations of style in the text in turn.

As if intended to be Egri's personal celebration of the O'Neill centennial in 1988, with which its publication coincided, *The Birth of American Tragedy* also enjoyed an enthusiastic international reception. Michael Hinden for *Comparative Drama* introduces the book as an informed study, whose author, a "distinguished Hungarian scholar," is found well equipped to offer a history of the genre once the term tragicomedy enters his critical narrative. Concerning the chapter on *Long Day's Journey*, Egri is said to "demonstrate[s] a patience for intricate linguistic notation that has no parallel in American commentary." About the usefulness of the book Hinden's summary runs as follows: "Students of O'Neill will be impressed with the book's thorough scholarship and intellectual sweep. *The Birth of American Tragedy* is a formidable resource whose gifts may be extracted by judicious skimming" (402–03). Frederick C. Wilkins, in *The Eugene O'Neill Review*, equally emphasizes the merits of Egri's both detailed and thoughtful discussion of *Long Day's Journey*,

adding that his "analysis of the family dynamics and his delineation of the playwright's 'concept of relative determinism' rank with the best." At the same time he makes a note of what is usually ignored in the majority of reviews, namely that the well researched contents of the book are "buttressed by extremely thorough notes" (86).

Elidegenedés és drámaforma: Az amerikai álom társadalomtörténete és lélekrajza O'Neill drámaciklusában (Alienation and Dramatic Form: The Social History and Psychological Portrait of the American Dream in O'Neill Drama Cycle), Egri's third book on O'Neill published still in 1988, is a highly specialized work of scholarship. Focusing on *A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed*, the playwright's monumental cycle, it regards it as central to the *oeuvre* in highlighting the nature of O'Neill's experimentation to dramatize the tension between American dream and American reality. The introduction details the experience of alienation in the playwright's life, which gave him the impetus to begin the cycle. Yet *A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed* remained incomplete, Egri argues, because the spatial, temporal and historical dimensions of the unfolding and ramifying concept spilled out of the dramatic form. In the bulk of the book three surviving plays of the cycle (originally planned to contain eleven parts) come under scrutiny. *A Touch of the Poet* is viewed as a play which integrates short story features, demonstrating affinity with Irish drama and its oral traditions on the one hand, and with the structural layout of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* on the other. Considering aspects of character and form, Egri contends that both O'Neill and Chekhov staged a double view of their respective "heroes," Melody and Vanya, resulting in tragicomedy. *More Stately Mansions* is treated under the title "Novel in the Drama," signalling how the play grew into the epic picture of a family's self-dispossession. From another angle, the analysis points out that the three main characters display features of split selves, deeply marked personal distortions, and also a wish to regain their autonomy by merging themselves with another personality. Finally, the unfinished play, *The Calms of Capricon* (whose 1983 Hungarian translation by Ágnes Gergely was its first ever rendering into another language, Egri informs his readers), appears in a chapter that sets it against various drama models preceding the work of O'Neill, highlighting thereby the heterogeneous

nature of its style. The cycle, left in torso as it happened to be, is worthy of attention the conclusion of the study runs, because it constitutes the probably most authentic dramatic "witness" to the author's struggle with form on the way toward creating the stylistic synthesis which will distinguish *Long Day's Journey*.

From Comparative Approach to Interdisciplinarity

1988 was also the year when the fourth (and, unfortunately, the last) period of Egri's scholarly career started, with the publication of *Literature, Painting and Music: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Comparative Literature*. The comparative approach frequently present in his ealier works remained very much characteristic of the unfolding final creative period, though with a difference: from the above book onwards the related and shared aspects of literature and the other arts become viewed together. It is in the later book, *Value and Form: Comparative Literature, Painting, and Music*, published in 1993, where a kind of "program" for the period gains elucidation, along with the description of a perspective the new studies tend to deploy:

> The most promising and rewarding type of comparison between literature and painting or literature and music can conveniently be termed axiological parallel. This is comparison based on shared values. Since this method implies the systematic collation of values outside and inside the works of art, and since the two spheres are connected by form which is instrumental in selecting, condensing, reordering, generalizing and assessing primary experience, axiological parallel is concerned both with matter and manner, attitude and form. (9)

Turning toward the contextualization of literary works with the help of certain achievements in the domain of the sister arts, Egri redefined the strategy of interpretation and evaluation when emphasizing the need for a sharpened focus on the cultural embeddedness of literature. By its nature, this kind of interdisciplinary approach ignores the limits of time and space, and the subsequent books and essays of the author lead their readers across a range of countries and centuries. Parts of *Literature, Painting and Music* remain unique in applying Stephen Spender's categories of "modern" and "contemporary" to the works of Hungarian poets Sándor Petőfi, Endre Ady, and Attila József, while looking for parallels in Hungarian

painters like Mihály Munkácsy, Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka, Aurél Bernáth, István Dési Huber and Gyula Derkovits.

Varying the strategy, in *Value and Form* Egri appears to be even more conscious of the idea of Walter Pater that the "various forms of intellectual activity which together make up the culture of an age, [...] partake indeed of a common character, and unconsciously illustrate each other;" as it is claimed in the preface to *The Renaissance* (xv). Besides summing up the research of many years, the book is the work of a scholar teacher who was in the habit of entering the classroom with not only books but also art albums and pieces of recorded music. Instead of abstract theorizing and using the works as mere illustrations, Egri's method in *Value and Form* continues to be a detailed analysis of its subject without any rigidly imposed pattern, seeking answers to the questions the material itself raises. Chapter IV of the book, for instance, is memorable for exploring one particular theme (the storm) and some corresponding images/symbols in Shelley, Turner, Field and Chopin. According to Egri, it is the Romantic artists' imagination-governed attraction to the unusual manifestations of nature which seems to be the shaping force behind the magnificence of their works. The joining of distant poles and diverse elements produces linguistic contrasts in poetry, "large-scale modulations" in music, and "masses of whirling colour" in painting (185). In the same chapter the Irish-born and relatively unknown, even neglected Romantic composer John Field is resurrected as an inventor, that of the musical genre of the nocturne, and his influence on Chopin becomes duly recorded. Continuing to intrigue the author, the ideas presented here are further expanded by the book *Érték és képzelet: Shelley, Turner, Field és Chopin* (Value and Imagination: Shelley, Turner, Field, and Chopin), which appeared in 1994.

The comprehensive nature of *Value and Form* lies also in the fact that besides the artists focused on more closely many others are called to mind, and as a "by-product" of the analyses, this results in enriching the text with further thought-provoking remarks. *Value and Form* treats several connections or just resonances between artists and art works which have received little or no attention by other scholars earlier. The respective manifestations of the 18th century novel of education (exemplified by *Tom Jones* in the book), and the classical

symphony dating back to the same age are found to represent a "panoramic broadness [...] combined with a measure of dramatic quality" (23). In its assessment of the structural correspondences between the Romantic sonnet, landscape painting and sonata, the originality of Egri's investigation is signalled by defining the pictorial phenomenon that is meaningfully termed as "visual enjambment" (80). The chapter on modern artists, on the other hand, makes a convincing distinction between types of the caricature, terming them occasional, trend and universal. The last of these, so forcefully and memorably practised by the major artists of the twentieth century, the author claims to be directed against no less than "*the* human predicament" (191).

Modern Games with Renaissance Forms: From Leonardo and Shakespeare to Warhol and Stoppard (1996), and *Text in Context: Literature and the Sister Arts* (2001), the last two books by Egri, reveal axiological parallels in literature and the other art forms with increasing complexity. In both, though not equally, there appears an interest in contemporary drama which is a relatively new field of interest in the scholarly oeuvre. An isolated essay, "American Variations on a British Theme: Giles Cooper and Edward Albee" from 1994 can be seen as introducing it, included in *Forked Tongues?: Comparing Twentieth-Century British and American Literature*, a collection published by Longman. The main question explored by Egri here is the fate of the absurd in the American theatre, its origins and originality in the work of Albee, the acknowledged American representative of the form, whose rewriting of a play by the Anglo-Irish Cooper serves as an example for the theoretical discussion. A comparison with Beckett, the European father of the absurd appears to be unavoidable. Different from the latter's creation of an "openly absurdist universe," Albee's art is found to unite "realistic and absurdist aspects, [continuing] this achievement of modern American drama, and places his dramatic art in the mainstream of the dramatic movement." This is "a characteristically American fusion," Egri continues, which can be traced back to O'Neill (145). Only a few years apart from the publication of Egri's essay, American drama critic Linda Ben-Zvi examined O'Neill and absurdity as part of another collection featuring international scholarship (33–55).

Modern Games continues the scrutiny of contemporary drama in a both interdisciplinary and international context and neighbourhood. As their general strategy, the analyses confront Renaissance works of art with their twentieth–century replicas and echoes to study the changes in reconstructing form and rechanneling meaning that such alterations are found to involve. Necessarily, iconoclasm, subversiveness, parody and irony become key-terms as well as vantage points throughout the volume. First the book examines the various avantgarde, pop art and postmodern transpositions of Leonardo's paintings, mainly *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper.* Testified by Egri's elaborate discussion, the twentieth–century re-workings result in fundamental shifts and disruptions in the system of established values. Robert Rauschenberg's four–piece *Pneumonia Lisa* (1982), for one, fits the analytical scheme of the author as "a work of artistic deconstruction eliciting acts of critical deconstruction" (23). Another example, Andy Warhol's notorious *Thirty Are Better Than One* (1963), which consists of a set of irregularly composed silkscreen prints of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, is interpreted here as thoroughly questioning the uniqueness of the original by fore-grounding the commercialization of art, a more than contentious "achievement" of our era.

A considerable part of *Modern Games*, however, focuses on the intertextual presence of Shakespeare in Stoppard's drama, bearing in mind, usefully, the parallels with Leonardo's fate in twentieth century painting and pop art. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966) easily lends itself for a closer examination, being a play that carries double parody, that of both *Hamlet* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot.* While elaborating on the interaction between Renaissance and (post)modern drama, the author traces the caricaturing of Hamlet's soliloquy in the Stoppard text, and points out that it ventures to omit the very substance of Shakespeare's words. Language and structure play a significant part in the re-writing process as Egri's argument clarifies:

> And to top it all, Shakespearean high blank verse is replaced by comic, contemporary, petty, if witty, prose. Order is also meaning: if Ros's prosaic pondering and blundering precede the parodistic fragment from Hamlet's soliloquy, they also prepare the spectator for the comic reinterpretation of the soliloquy. (60)

Notably, *Modern Games* incorporates the first extended discussion of several aspects of Stoppard's dramatic work by a Hungarian scholar. Later plays like *Travesties* (1974), *Dog's Hamlet* (1976), and *Cahoot's Macbeth* (1978) are also examined in the book, the author finding in them other echoes of Shakespeare which contribute, in a variety of ways, to the artistic effect of disruption and ironizing.

In addition to the thoughtfully defined inquiry into the exciting spectrum of the modes of treating Renaissance texts in the twentieth century, *Modern Games* draws attention to cultural and theatrical self-reference producing layers of fictionality in Stoppard and his contemporaries, which destabilize fixed meanings and provoke a number of new questions. Regarding Egri's method, intertextual parallels are identified by him in order to facilitate the differentiation between the dramatic strategies involved. In his interpretation Rosencrantz and Guildenstern invite comparison with doubled figures in Gogol, Dürrenmatt and, of course, Beckett, to negotiate the politics of the theatrical reconstruction of identity problems. The relationship of doubles is seen as basically complementary in Stoppard's play with clear resemblance to how Vladimir and Estragon are linked, already pinpointed by Martin Esslin (46). At the same time, Egri's analysis highlights that psychological pairs (for instance the ones in certain relevant plays of O'Neill and Brian Friel), do differ from the personality patterning both Beckett and Stoppard operate with, in that they serve the process of internal characterization. Branching out from its original vantage point, thus the argument in this section gains wider theoretical implications by connnecting itself to the current international discussion about the ideologically as well as dramaturgically elusive boundaries of the conventionally used category of the dramatic character.

The significance of *Modern Games* in the very oeuvre of Egri and for scholarship in general is underscored by its enthusiastic reception abroad. In *Theatre Research International* Thomas F. Connolly, understandably, concentrates on the sections dealing with drama. The beginning of his review strikes a note by referring to the sophistication of Egri's analysis, and considers it necessary to remark that "superficially it would seem to be a postmodernist scholarly discourse. This is not the case, however, since Peter Egri's readings are far too

learned and genuinely engaged to be merely trendy." The reviewer concludes his sympathetically sound appraisal of *Modern Games* by recommending it as "essential reading for dramaturgs, critics and theorists" (90). Günter Walch, writing for *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, welcomes Egri's comparative subject elaborated in what he calls a "lively book," an "exception to the rule [...] at a time of overspecialization" (79). Furthermore, Walch calls attention to some other valuable details that the study offers on Stoppard, for instance concerning the writer's "personal involvement in political activities [which] changed his social and moral commitment," which results in the rediscovery of "lost values" in a ertain segment of his oeuvre by Egri (80).

As if sharing and enjoying the Yeatsian "fascination of what is difficult" (Yeats 104), Egri continued to deal with Stoppard in other interdisciplinary essays. "From Painting to Play: Magritte and Stoppard," included in *Text in Context*, undertakes a kind of literary detective work, somewhat in the spirit of Stoppard himself, exploring the paradoxical presence-in-absence of the surrealist painter in the drama. The painter's method being identified as "substantiated absurdity" by Egri, the playwright is said to enhance, exaggerate, and ironize its model (241, 246), replacing the mystification of the world by its demystification. Another essay in the same collection, "From Painting to Play: Duchamp and Stoppard" is as much of a study of the painter as that of the drama *Artist Descending a Staircase*. Egri is surveying the painter's work to contextualize the picture *Nude Descending a Staircase*, which obviously inspired the playwright. By writing the drama, Egri summarizes, "Stoppard's dual position results in a spirited insight into, and a witty ironization of, Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, and broadens into a dramatic discussion of the situation of art in modern times" (237). Its content and method of argumentation combined in an original way, Egri's essay itself presents a spirited insight of its own into the postmodern playwright's intellectually provoking and teasingly intricate artistic endeavours.

The other contemporary playwright Egri found equally intriguing was, evidently, Beckett, perhaps also because the writer had absorbed so much from his master, Joyce, who fascinated Egri thoughout his career. *Text in Context* includes an essay which discusses *Act Without*

Words I and *Catastrophe*, elaborating on points of interaction between drama and painting, but now approaching the subject from the angle of parallels. Like the other of his great Irish masters, Yeats, Beckett had a strong visual imagination, manifest in his portrayal of sensation as well as inner trauma on stage by an inventive composition and co-ordination of facial expression, gestures, and bodily movements. According to Egri, *Act Without Words I* dramatizes the genesis of the absurd drama by visualizing it, which is a hardly surprizing act from a playwright who had written insighful criticism on several painters including Jack Butler Yeats, the poet-playwright's brother (268–69). The discussion of *Catastrophe*, while it underscores its thematic concern with, and reflection on the political situation as well as the concomitant limitations of intellectual life in pre-1989 Eastern Europe, points to parallel images in the sister arts. Dublin-born Francis Bacon is referred to as the first example, on account of some of his paintings carrying a Beckettian sense of claustrophobic isolation and nighmarish constraint in the distorted human faces portrayed. Next Henry Moore's sculptures are found to present similar effects of grotesque depersonalization to the humiliation suffered by the character called Protagonist in Beckett's drama *Catastrophe*—tellingly dedicated to Václav Havel at the time of its writing, in 1982 (270–73).

To the question whether he cherished one as a favourite among his own books, in the already cited interview Egri answered that it had always been the last one (Kurdi 131). Looking at *Text in Context* with this in mind, we find the book dominated by an undoubtedly great favourite of the scholar, Shakespeare, whose poetry and drama feature in as many as seven essays of the volume. The one titled "One Man's Ambiguity Is Another's Ambivalence" stands out being a both sophisticated and witty scrutiny of Gothic and romantic re-presentations of certain Shakespearean figures and themes, demonstrating a keen sense of how the tone and poetic ambiguities call for their equivalent in the other arts. Egri highlights Henry Fuseli's deviation from Shakespeare in his painting *The Three Witches*, which "needed a specifically pictorial-spatial means to reach Shakespeare's group effect and to replace the poet-dramatist's magic metre," as well as attempted to match "the parallel phrases, and prophetic greetings of the witches"

with "the strictly lateral view of the three profiles" (164). Another example is Felix Mendelssohn's "Overture" to the opera *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which endeavours to transmit some of the subtleties of Shakespeare's dramatic characterization by purely musical means. The artist's work is appreciated for meeting the challenge through his choice of E major as the basic key of the piece, "a magic key" which seems to be able to evoke "the magic of nature" in the wording of the analyst (169). In this part of the essay a considerably detailed and appropriately illustrated discussion pays due attention to the romantic composer's efforts to create a kind of musical ambiguity to serve as an authentic counterpart of Shakespeare's verbal art. All in all, this last volume of Egri's scholarly oeuvre has the unique feature that while it re-deploys the viewpoint of axiology it succeeds in discovering an even broader range of intrinsic connections between literature and the sister arts than the previous books.

Coda: Values in Balance

A not at all insignificant aspect of Egri's scholarly heritage is how his writings present research findings, new ideas, and make comments. The prose of his critical works can be found exemplary for its subtle and witty use of language and sharp logic of argumentation. It is with extraordinary verbal precision that he expounds the merits of literary works and describes the manifold results of artistic cross-fertilization. His books and studies testify that the value of his awesome erudition and thorough understanding of the essence of the arts has found its appropriate expression not only in chiselled argument and finely structured syntax but also in style. In her contribution to the Discussion Panel in Memory of Péter Egri at the HUSSE 6 Conference in 2003, Krisztina Szalay chose to speak about the scholar's very last volume, *Text in Context*, and took special care to remind the audience of the richness of humour complicating as well as colouring the discursive and analytical arsenal characteristic of the essays. "From Painting to Play: Duchamp and Stoppard" begins with a highly comic question-and-answer game, alluding to the *par excellence* artistic, non-mimetic origin of the painting the playwright was intrigued by:

> Is it conceivable that a Futuristically multiplied Cubist nude is descending a winding staircase? It is, if one can explain where the nude is coming from and going to. Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (No. 1 1911, No. 2 1912, No. 3 1916) is coming from the experimental studio of a witty and restless artist who liked to surprise, baffle and shock the spectator. (227)

The critical style matches the subject most wittily here, as part of the challenging introduction of the reader to the work of a writer of intricate verbal talent and enormous intellectual sophistication, and revealing, at the same time, that the critic, *pace* Wilde, can aspire to become a kind of artist too.

At the ESSE 4 Conference in 1997, hosted by Lajos Kossuth University Debrecen, a round table session was dedicated to the life and work of professor László Országh (1907–1984), the outstanding and highly influential lexicologist, Anglicist, as well as founding father of American studies in Hungary. An assistant professor of Országh's English Department at Kossuth University in the 1960s, Péter Egri participated in the event along with a selected group of other scholars. True to his interest in drama, and in tune with his own performing talents, it was with an admirable mixture of deeply felt respect and warm humour that he presented a vividly dramatized picture of Országh as scholar and senior colleague in four acts, which began and concluded with the train journeys between Budapest and Debrecen and back the same route that both Országh and Egri had to take every week. In his introductory words to the published version of the round table discussion Zsolt Virágos, convenor of the session claims that Országh "has left many tracks in the profession and [...] has bequeathed a legacy that is both impressive and unique" (369). It is well justifiable to apply similar terms in an assessment of Péter Egri's work all the more so as he was selected to be one of the first two recipients of the Országh László Award in 1997, which recognized the quality of his academic and scholarly achievements in the fields of study that Országh himself had cultivated and excelled in.

The present essay does not intend to ignore the fact that Egri's scholarly progress is inseparable from, though not at all directly dependent on the context provided by the contemporary political, social and cultural changes and processes. Written by a scholar of a highly individual talent, his works, taken as a whole, offer a particular

kind of insight into the discontinuous and shredded history of Hungarian literary criticism during the last four decades of the twentieth century, a period of paralyzing restrictions and then considerable transformations in the intellectual life of this part of Europe. They show a pervasive interest in generic and comparative studies combined with the influence of a liberal form of Marxism at the beginning, which gives way to an axiologically based approach and interdisciplinary-oriented cultural criticism later. Without totally erasing the precedents though, which is fortunate from the point of view of organic development remaining a main characteristic of Egri's scholarly oeuvre. If "the magic hand of chance" (Keats 152) had allowed him more years to live, Péter Egri may have continued his work in the field of contemporary English-speaking drama, perhaps writing a monographic study of Stoppard or Beckett, or both, but it is difficult to surmise. Certain it is, however, that to the very end he retained the remarkable versatility of his scholarly interests: in fall 2002 he was to participate as speaker in a conference dedicated to the fiction of Tibor Déry, an important subject of Egri's research at the beginning of his career. Sadly, death intervened in September of the same year, causing a great loss to the professions of literary study and academic education in Hungary and also outside Hungary. His paper, planned to revisit and most probably re-evaluate Déry so many years after the publication of his book about that writer, was never presented.

Having become complete by his yet untimely death, the "full-ripen'd grain" of Egri's literary scholarship is now held by the studies and books he published. Through their analytical strengths which point into several directions while they present new findings, his works reflect and build on the rarely achieved unity of scholar and teacher in one person, who possessed an exceptional confidence in the analysis not only of literature, but also the other arts. The knowledge the writings incorporate and store informs and enriches the readers as well as challenges them by enhancing awareness of undiscovered or uncharted territories in scholarship, worthy of further exploration and analysis. Undeniably, considering certain trains of thought, assertions, examples or conclusions in the books and studies the reader may disagree with the author and feel it necessary to turn toward modes of

inquiry or approaches different from Egri's. But as his works have no intention to disseminate unquestionable truths and convert the reader to their point of view by any means, they invite responses which can be as varied as the challenge itself. Inspiring others in several ways is, therefore, a principal value of Péter Egri's scholarly heritage, taking shape in the present and future achievement of his fellow researchers, younger colleagues and students. His work remains alive and influential through its original findings as well as its untiringly inquisitive spirit.

Note

Parts of this essay rely on the ideas and insights appearing in my reviews of several of Péter Egri's books, which were published by *Filológiai Közlöny*, *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*, *Irish Literary Supplement* and *Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*.

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LEHEL VADON

PÉTER EGRI'S SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENTS: HIS BIBLIOGRAPHY

Péter Egri first and foremost was an Anglicist, Americanist, and a scholar of comparative literary and cultural studies. But he was much more than that. His wide range of knowledge, field of interests, and research covered diverse domains of literary scholarship: from English and American literature to Hungarian, German, Russian, Irish, French, Spanish and Norwegian literature, from Renaissance studies to modernism, from drama to short story, from painting to music; and an imposing portrait gallery of writers and artists: from Mark Twain to Hemingway, from O'Neill to Albee, from Fielding to Huxley, from Attila József to Sándor Weöres, from Ibsen to Synge, from Michelangelo to Constable, and from Britten to Cage.

His scholarly oeuvre and career path was even and well-balanced, original and influential. He was a prolific and versatile writer, studies, essays, and reviews appeared from his pen regularly in major Hungarian and foreign periodicals. His sixteen books are cornerstones in English, American, and Hungarian literary culture and arts studied and widely cited both in Hungary and beyond our border.

The publication of his complete bibliography is a mark of my thankfulness and respect for Professor Péter Egri.

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PÉTER EGRI

(PER)CHANCE: JOYCE AND CAGE

The encounter of avant-garde literature with avant-garde music is always a momentous event. It proved doubly so when the author was James Joyce and the composer John Cage.

The catalyst happened to be the noted mezzo-soprano, Janet Fairbank, who in 1942 requested Cage to set a text by Joyce to music. Cage accepted the commission, adopted and adapted a passage from page 556 of *Finnegans Wake*, and called it *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs*. The title came from a phrase on that page, though it was not included in the excerpt itself. The selected words of the composition are as follows:

> night by silentsailing night Isobel wildwood's eyes and primarose hair, quietly, all the woods so wild, in mauves of moss and daphnedews, how all so still she lay, neath of the whitethorn, child of tree, like some losthappy leaf, like blowing flower stilled, as fain would she anon, for soon again 'twill be, win me, woo me, wed me, ah weary me! deeply, now evencalm lay sleeping; night, Isobel, sister Isobel, Saintette Isabelle, Madame Isa Veuve La Belle (Joyce 556)

Here, as so often elsewhere in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce's prose is poetically dense and musically rich. To increase the musical quality of the passage, Cage has rearranged and condensed Joyce's text.

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* Péter Egri was the key-note lecturer at HUSSE 5 Conference in Eger. It was his last presentation. The publication of his lecture is a mark and expression of our Institute of English and American Studies' high respect and gratitude for his participation and contribution to the success of the conference.

The first line ("night by silentsailing night Isobel") is so short because Cage has cut out the second half of the original, allowing only the name of Isobel to stay. He has kept the Joycean sequence of words from "wildwood's eyes" to "lay sleeping," repeated "night" from the first line (or took it over from the thirteenth), and created a stylistic coda by the culminating and caressing repetitions of petting, elevating and sanctifying versions of Isobel's name collected and grouped from lines 1, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 16.

Thus abbreviated and reordered, the text suggests a quiet, calm and pure image, which emphasizes beauty by ending on "Belle."

The words are also characterized by auditory awareness. It becomes evident in a number of ways.

1. Long-sounding, sonorous, slow and soft words are repeated. "Night" occurs in this short passage three times, the first echo coming very soon ("*night* by silentsailing *night*"). Its effect is semantically and musically increased by "evencalm." The phrase "wildwood's eyes" is soon reinforced by the group "all the woods so wild." The personal pronoun "me" is heard four times. "Belle" resounds the last syllable of "Isa*belle.*" Reverberations of words culminate in the final addresses to "Isobel, sister Isobel, Saintette Isabelle, Madame Isa Veuve la Belle."

2. The lyric saturation of the text is also revealed by the poetic-musical effect of occasional rhymes ("night," "wild," "child" and even the first syllable of the compound "whitethorn" as well as "be" and "me").

3. The functional quality of the auditory plane is quite obvious in the great number of overt and covert, initial or internal alliterations. They are so significant that they sometimes generate unusual, indeed new words and phrases, subordinating ordinary meaning and syntax to the epiphany of euphony: "*s*ilent*s*ailing," "*w*ild*w*ood's," "*w*oods so *w*ild," *m*auves of *m*oss," "*d*aphne*d*ews" (alluding to the mythical story of Apollo and Daphne), "*s*o *s*till," "*l*osthappy *l*eaf," "'t*w*ill be," "*w*in *m*e," "*w*oo *m*e," "*w*ed *m*e," "*w*eary *m*e," "*s*ister Isobel" and "*S*aintette Isabelle (recalling, implying and intoning King Mark's and Tristram's passion for Iseult, evoking Iseult's love for Tristram, and hinting at HCE's ambiguous emotions for his daughter).

4. Auditory awareness is also apparent in rocking, lulling parallel phrases like "by silentsailing night," "all the woods so wild," "how all

so still she lay," "like some losthappy leaf," "like blowing flower stilled," "as fain would she anon," "for soon again 'twill be," "sister Isobel," or "Saintette Isabelle."

The text is not simply "written," it is indeed "composed."

It was John Cage's ingenious recognition that it could, in fact, be composed in a strictly musical sense: that it could be set to music. Cage focuses the same values as Joyce does.

Cage's music sounds like the natural and sensitive elongation of Joyce's text. The quality of the voice part can be analysed in terms of Joyce's words.

1. The repetition of sustained, sonorous, slow and soft words is present both in the text and in the voice. The singing part even enhances these characteristics. The sound B representing "night" (bar 1) is a half note. When "night" returns in the text, B recurs in the voice (bar 2). Naturally long because of its diphthong, "night" appears to be even longer by dint of the linguistic pause following it. In a comparable way, being a half-note, the musical sound rendering "night" is long by its nature when it is first heard, and it is even longer when it comes back in bar 2, since it is dotted and tied to another B, in fact, another half note in bar 3. The latter is also tied to a B, and the rest of the bar is filled with rests. Even bar 4 begins with a quarter rest.

As a tune sung, Joyce's text sounds increasingly sonorous, especially when it is performed by such rich (recorded) voices as those of Arlene Carmen, contralto, Cathy Berberian, contralto, Mutsumi Masuda, soprano, or Rosalind Rees, alto.

Expressing the mood of night and dreamy, indeed dreaming desire, the Joycean words follow each other slowly. The tempo of Cage's music is also very slow with metronome marking 58 quarter notes to the minute. The time signature is 4/4 to the bar. Rests and tied notes are frequent. The calm of the night and the disposition of longing contemplation are also brought home by the expressive monotony of the tempo. As far as bar 20, no change of speed is marked. While to express the musical equivalent of growing emotional tension in "win me, woo me, wed me, ah" (in Cage's spelling "AH!") *poco stringendo* is prescribed in bars 20–22; to render the ultimate relaxation of tension by the end of the phrase "weary me! deeply" *ritartando* is required in bars 22 and 23, and a *fermata* is used at the end of bar 23.

In a similar fashion, whereas the enthusiastic, enchanted and enraptured apostrophizing of "sister Isobel, Saintette Isabelle"—with Cage ISOBEL—, and "Madame Isa Veuve La Bel-" is supposed to be sung *poco accelerando* in bars 28–31, the last syllable of the name ("-le") is requested to be conveyed by the singer with a whispering slide from A to B *ritartando molto* in the last two bars (32–33).

Singing slow is also singing low. The overall mood of Joyce's passage is that of a silent night-piece charged with quiet desire. Cage's music is also soft in tone. Its average volume is *piano* with gently breathing *crescendo*s and *decrescendo*s, tracing the emotional course of yearning pulse. A *crescendo* never rises beyond the level of *mezzo-forte* (as in bar 6 to depict Isobel's "*primarose* hair," in bar 22 to suggest, with short, wishful imperatives, the swelling of desire in "win me, woo me, wed me, *ah weary me!*" or in bar 30 to highlight "Isa" and "Veuve"). A *decrescendo* may soften the tone into *pianissimo* (as in bars 2–3) where "night" is qualified "silentsailing," or in bar 26 where "night" appears after "now evencalm lay sleeping" and two quarter rests).

2. What one might consider the musical approximation of Joyce's occasional rhymes is the rising return of the note B at the end of a motif constituting a musical cell. This happens—among other cases—in bar 2 setting the word "night," in bar 8 setting "wild," in bar 13 rendering "child," as well as in bars 20–22 setting "'t*will be*," "*win me*," "woo *me*," and "wed *me*."

3. Since in the latter set two short words are aurally linked, the recurring initial *w-* in the first word is given auditory emphasis, the reiterated imperatives add grammatical importance, the semantic energy of the repeated request provides additional weight, and each of these words are set to music by the note A, therefore the *w-s* in "'t*w*ill," "*w*in," and "*w*ed" sound as potential musical parallels of a linguistic alliteration. In another instance, textual alliteration ("*m*auves of *m*oss") is musically rendered by two identical notes (B-s) *and* an accent mark on the first B (bars 9–10).

4. One of the most remarkable features of Joyce's beautifying and beatifying nocturne is the repeated return of certain groups of words characterized by sonorous numerosity. It is typical of Cage's lyrical empathy and musical sensibility that he has captured all these parallel

phrases, related them to each other, found their musical equivalents, and, in fact, based his setting on them.

He has set the phrase "by silentsailing night" using five eighth notes and a dotted half note (bars 1–2) following closely the rhythmic pattern of Joyce's syllables. The first and last notes of the motif are B-s, just as the first and last notes of the whole song are B-s. They make it clear that the lack of any key signature does not indicate the tonality of C major or A minor. Nor do the B-s represent B major or B minor. They are just the notes around which the E (four steps up) and the A (one step down) turn. The miniature motif may remind one of an Oriental segment, a pentatonic fragment (violinist Zsolt Sokoray's conjecture). The motif creates a hovering and gently undulating effect, which is stepped up by dreamlike repetition, rhythmic variation and the changing order of the same notes.

The quiet floating of co-ordinated musical motifs corresponds to the silent streaming of co-ordinated linguistic phrases listed in an Impressionist-Surrealist nominal manner. Within the first twenty-seven words not a single verb appears, no predicate occurs. "Lay" is a static verb. It is only in the second part of the song that the insistent urge of dreamy desire generates a set of verbs welling up in the imperative form ("win me, woo me, wed me, ah weary me!"). They may be triggered off by a possibly Viconian impulse of cyclic recurrence implied in "as fain would she anon, for soon again 'twill be." This may be the reason why "win me" sounds a rhyming answer to the call of "'twill be," and why the music in this phase becomes more animated.

In assessing the importance of all such procedures of change and variation, one must bear in mind that the elements to be changed and varied are very limited in scope. Besides B, E and A, no other notes are heard in the entire composition. The melodic range of Cage's song is deliberately small. Its voluntary minimalism perfectly fits the calm of the night, the mood of the dream, the mind of the dreamer, the shape of the girl, and the gentleness of desire.

Disregarding the key structure of the major—minor system goes hand in hand with overstepping the time signature of 4/4: the six notes of the musical motif spread over two bars and relativize the very first bar line. This is not an isolated case (cf. bars 4–5, 8–9, 9–10, 12–13,

13–14, 17–18, etc.). Tonal and rhythmic ambiguities once again perfectly suit the nature of the dream and the quality of the text, which, with its lyric density, approaches *free* verse.

If Joyce repeats his *leitmotiv*-like phrase ("How all so still she lay,") Cage also renews his *ostinato*-like motif (the six notes of B, B, E, B, A, and B in bar 12).

When Joyce reduces his phrase into five syllables ("all the woods so wild,") Cage follows suit (the five notes of B, B, B, A and B in bar 8).

With his musical means the composer can even do what the author can only suggest: that there is an inner connection between Isobel and the usual six syllables of the recurring motif. Joyce can lay a linguistic stress on the first syllable of Isobel's name, but Cage in bar 4 can and does set her name by a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth and a quarter note (B, A, B). The name's total time value then amounts to the length of six eighth notes: the duration of the six notes in bars 18 and 19 setting "as fain would she anon" (E, B, B, B, A and B). This may exemplify the way in which setting words to music can make explicit what is implicitly included in the text. The emphasis on Isobel's name is effectively expressed by its laudatory versions, repetitive incantations, melismatic forms and augmented appearances at the end of Cage's song.

The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs has been composed for voice and piano. A piano accompaniment may provide chordal support to the singing voice, but Cage's piano does not. The piano may play a figurative pattern to give harmonic underpinning to the voice, but Cage's does not. The piano may take over a part or the whole of the melody and may then complement the voice, but Cage's does not. The piano part may constitute a counterpoint, but Cage's does not.

What does Cage's piano do then? The unsuspecting pianist (let us suppose he is a traditionally educated, pinch-hitting male turning over the first two stuck pages of the score quickly and nervously to sight-read his part in a hurry) might wish to solve the riddle in an empirical manner and play the notes as he normally would. After all, under the stave of the voice, he can see the customary two staves for the piano. Before the singer's part the word VOICE clearly indicates what the composer wishes the singer to sing. Before the other two staves the word PIANO can be read. The voice and the piano parts are co-

ordinated: the time signatures (4/4) are clearly written out at the fronts of all three staves. The singer has already started with a beautiful motif. She has sung her two unaccompanied bars. The pianist is required to enter in bar 3. If he does not, he is sure to lose his contact with the singer and may even lose his contract with his employer. An accompanist cannot run that risk. Somewhat tense, he will keep his mind on the job at hand, he will use his two silent bars for preparing to start in the third at the right moment, all the more so since after his entry he will have to play three quick quintuplets and one triplet. The first notes of the first and second quintuplets are accented, but that of the third one is not. Rendering the triplet, both the first and the third notes must be accented. The pianist must not get it wrong. So he makes his entry dead on time, playing a bass A with his left hand and four treble A-s with his right hand. The first quintuplet is over.

The effect is disastrous. The A-s are out of tune with the B of the voice. To make things worse, this happens when the tender lyricism of "silentsailing *night*" is set, and continues to occur all the way through the song at the most unexpected and inappropriate places. In bar 4 the bass C of the left hand is out of tune with the B of the voice petting the name of "Iso*bel.*" The simultaneous A played by the right hand in the treble register also sounds false. In bar 28 the bass G played by the left hand is a discordant note to accompany the A of the voice at the end of the passionate address to "sister I*sobel.*" The same is true of the bass G starting a quintuplet and accompanying a soft and tied A of the voice celebrating "Isa Veuve La *Bel*le," to mention only a few examples. Chaos incarnate. The concert has proved a total failure. This is the end.

The disconcerted pianist may at this point turn to the beginning once again. A Viconian move. To his surprise, he will find that while the voice part is introduced by a treble clef, no clefs guide the two staves of the piano. There is no treble clef for the right hand and no bass clef for the left one. Is the note in the first (bottom) space of the third stave something different from a bass A? Is the note in the second space something other than a bass C? Is the note in the third space not a bass E? Does the note in the fourth space not denote a bass G? Perchance. What are they then?

At the start of the first bar of the piano part, one can admittedly read, in very small writing, the word "CLOSED." What does that mean? Following the large letters of the title page, and preceding the actual parts for the voice and the piano, on page 2 of the work, which the pianist may at first easily overlook but will now certainly look over, he can find a corroboration of the initial instruction in bar 1 of the piano part: the grand piano is supposed to be completely closed. Both the keyboard-lid and the strings-cover must be closed.

Can one play a closed piano? Perchance he can if he hits it. In some compositions the keys are pressed not so much for pitch but more for beat, not so much for melody but much rather for rhythm. Cage's intention, however, is different. Totally disregarding the pitches of the strings, he uses the closed piano as a percussion instrument. A man of exact notation, he clearly specifies what his notes mean and what the pianist should do. If the pianist sees notes on the first (bottom) space of the stave, he is required to hit the under part of the piano. If he perceives notes on the second space, he is supposed to drum on the front part of the keyboard-lid. When he senses notes on the third space, he must touch the back and higher part of the lid. When he takes note of notes on the fourth space, he should hit the top of the piano.

Not to leave the pianist at a loss, Cage gives him instructions as to the manner of hitting as well. Regular notes mean that the pianist should drum with his fingers. Notes with x-s as heads indicate that he must use the knuckles of his closed hands. The lower staff is reserved for the left hand, and the upper stave for the right hand, without any reference to bass or treble.

Can such a piano accompaniment be effective? Is the use of the piano as a mere percussion instrument compatible with the calm of the night? Can it express tender yearning? Don't drum-rolls disturb the gentle mood of Joyce's piece? Don't they disrupt the peace of the passage? Doesn't hitting a musical instrument with knuckles involve violence?

These questions cannot be answered theoretically. If one listens to Cage's song, one finds that the accompaniment is quite appropriate. It adds sophisticated rhythmic variety to the dreamy and repetitive singing of the voice. Its subdued volume does not destroy the calm of the text. By often being even softer and lower than the voice, it does

not suppress the voice. A measure of violence is even implied in Joyce's allusions to the Mark—Tristram—Iseult relationship and their contemporary correlatives. Soft noises may even increase silence. The quasi-drum-rolls lend a mysterious dimension to the dreaming shifts of Joyce's piece.

If, however, Cage uses the piano as a percussion instrument, then "Why use a piano?"—as Richard Barnes, associate professor of English at Pomona College, aptly asks in his witty paper "Our Distinguished Dropout." (Barnes—Kostelanetz, *JCA* 50) Even if part of the explanation might be, as Barnes also suggests, Cage's inclination for theatricality and the audience's knowledge that the instrument being struck is a piano, and even if drumming on the piano is not inconsistent with Joyce's text, the element of arbitrariness in drumming on the piano rather than on a drum (or a percussion quartet) is certainly there. In one of the recordings of *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* the piano is, in fact, replaced by a percussion instrument (Kostelanetz, *JCA* 231). Cage's famous prepared piano in *Sonatas and Interludes* (1946–8) with screws, nuts, bolts, rubber, erasers and plastic mutes between the strings removing "pitch characteristic of scales and modes ... is a percussion ensemble under the control of a single player." (Cage—Kostelanetz, *JCA* 76)

The range of voice in *The Wonderful Widow* is also surrounded by accidental circumstances. Although in the voice part, Cage has unambiguously indicated pitches by regular musical notes, in his note for the singer he remarks, "Make any transposition necessary in order to employ a low and comfortable range." (Cage, *WWES* 2) In some recordings the singer is female (Mutsumi Masuda), in another case he is male (Robert Wyatt). Sometimes the kind of voice is described (Cathy Berberian, contralto), at other times it is not, and is just referred to in unspecified generality after the name (Joan La Barbara, voice). Chance is looming large in Cage's principle of indeterminacy, not unrelated even at this early stage to later Postmodern positions.

Can composition by chance be more pervasive? Perchance it can. So Cage's subsequent works suggest, and so his later treatments of *Finnegans Wake* seem to prove (*Writing through Finnegans Wake* 1977, *Writing for the Second Time through Finnegans Wake* 1977, *Writings through Finnegans Wake* 1978, *Roaratorio, an Irish Circus*

on Finnegans Wake 1979, *Third, Fourth Writings through Finnegans Wake* 1980, *Fifth Writing through Finnegans Wake* 1980). Cage's interest in Joyce is also evident in his comparative paper "James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Eric Satie: An Alphabet" (1981), an essay of "both re-inscription and deconstruction." (Perloff—Perloff and Junkerman, *JCCIA* 118) Cage has even claimed that "living in this century, we live, in a very deep sense, in the time of *Finnegans Wake*" (Cage and Kostelanetz—Gena, Brent and Gillespie, *JCR* 146).

Dissatisfied with limiting his attention to just a few lines of *Finnegans Wake* as he did in setting *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs*, in his later obsessive Joycean ventures, Cage enlarged his focus and extended the scope and variety of his chance operations.

1. Mesostics. While in an acrostic in verse or prose, "usually the initial letters of each line can be read down the page to spell either an alphabet, a name (often that of the author, a patron, or a loved one), or some other concealed message," (Baldick 2) in a mesostic, as Cage uses the term, the same procedure is adopted within the words. A mesostic is an internal acrostic. In Cage's words, an acrostic is "the name down the edge. A mesostic is a name down the middle." (Cage and Kostelanetz—Gena, Brent and Gillespie, *JCR* 143) Some authors, including Baldick, consider the Cagean mesostic a variant of acrostic. Some of Cage's "mesostics" are, in fact, acrostics.

Cage must have supposed that nothing could possibly be more Joycean in *Finnegans Wake* than Joyce's name, so he has chosen words and phrases from *Finnegans Wake* that included, somewhere in the middle, the letters J-A-M-E-S J-O-Y-C-E. As a means of convenience, he has capitalized the appropriate letters. Accordingly, the first mesostic is: "wroth with twone nathandJoe," "A," "Malt," "JhEm," "Shen," "pftJschute," "Of Finnegan," "that the humptYhillhead of humself," "is at the knoCk out," and "in thE park." (Joyce 3)

Cage was especially proud of the last mesostic of *Writing through Finnegans Wake*. It comes from the last but one page of Joyce's work and certainly sounds evocative:

Just a whisk
Of
pitY
a Cloud
in pEace and silence
(Joyce 627)

2. Accidental punctuation. In his 1978 interview with Richard Kostelanetz, John Cage referred to another chance procedure he was going to adopt in redoing the *Wake*: "Then what I'm going to do, Richard, is distribute the punctuation by chance operations on the page like an explosion. Read just the text and you'll see the punctuation omitted. You can imagine it where you like. You can replace it where you wish." (Cage and Kostelanetz—Gena, Brent and Gillespie, *JCR* 145)

3. Orienting punctuation according to the twelve parts of the clock. Since the night hours are significant in Joyce's dream myth, on page 1 of Cage's version of the *Wake* "the exclamation point ... is tilted slightly like the tower of Pisa." (Cage and Kostelanetz—Gena, Brent and Gillespie, *JCR* 145)

4. Keeping an index. To cut down the enormous size of his *Writing through Finnegans Wake*, and to maintain the importance of chance, for the purposes of *Writing for the Second Time through Finnegans Wake*, Cage kept a card index of mesostic syllalbles already used and thereby discarded unnecessary repetitions. In this manner, he reduced 125 pages to 39.

5. *I Ching*. One of Cage's favourite methods in deciding what musical notes to put down, or what phrases, words, syllablcs and letters to use and how to combine them in composing or recomposing a text was tossing up three coins six times or throwing up marked sticks – as it is described in minute detail in the ancient Chinese book of oracles, *I Ching*. Tom Stoppard caricatured the procedure at the witty start of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Marcel Duchamp played with the idea of composing chance music by numbering the keys of the piano and pulling out numbers at random from a hat (*Musical Erratum*) or – in another version – from a vase (*The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even. Musical Erratum*).

Stoppard in his turn travestied the method in his *Travesties* showing Tristan Tzara drawing out in Dadaist fashion the cut-up words of Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 from Joyce's hat (Stoppard, *T 54-5).* Cage, however, was overjoyed by the accidental potential of *I Ching* chance operations and proudly told Kostelanetz that in rewriting *Finnegans Wake* he did not have to toss the actual coins any longer, but could now rely on a coded printout simulating the tossing of three coins six times. (Cage and Kostelanetz—Gena, Brent and Gillespie, *JCR* 148-9) Chance programmed and modernized – yet patently guaranteed. The printout was devised by a young man called Ed Kobrin at the University of Illinois in 1967–9 for *HPSCHD*, Cage's composition subtitled solos for one to seven amplified harpsichords and tapes for one to fifty-one amplified monaural machines.

Joyce's works are certainly not devoid of chance either. The accidental turns of the short stories in *Dubliners*, the free associations of the stream of consciousness, the technique of the interior monologue in *Ulysses* and the dream-like shifts of people and places in *Finnegans Wake* bear ample witness to Joyce's interest in chance.

Yet Joyce the master builder has created the enormous pattern of Homeric parallels in *Ulysses* and of Viconian cycles and mythical structures in *Finnegans Wake.* (Cf. among others Beckett 3–22; Wilson 243–71; Ellmann 565, 575, 706; Campbell and Robinson 3–27; Gilbert 38; Senn 1–8; Boyle 247–54; Hart–Staley 135–65; Fáj 65–80; Bíró 5–26) *Mutatis mutandis*, these constructions, I think, correspond to the dodecaphonic serialism of Schoenberg's music.

A one-time student of Schoenberg and a professed anarchist (Kostelanetz, *JCA* 7–8), Cage has learnt all he could from Schoenberg, but decided he would take the opposite course. With Schoenberg, everything is system. With Cage, all is chance. (Boyden 408–19, 524–7; Chase 587–94) With his aleatory operations, Cage has methodically knocked out the system from his master's and predecessor's music. Cage was striving for "heightened incoherence," "an ordered disorder." (Kostelanetz, *JCA* 196) In his redoing *Finnegans Wake*, he has deliberately destroyed Joyce's structures and replaced them by clearly calculated accidental techniques.

Under "normal" conditions, human life evolves in trends, which are neither all necessity nor mere contingency. This is the precondition of

plot in narrative art and melody, harmony and tonality in music. When the experience of *any* imposed order, totalitarianism and the mass destruction of world wars make necessity a hostile force and generality an external power, then the artist will experiment with creating counter-worlds. One manifestation of this effort is the extreme patterning of experience in High Modernism. Another expression of this predicament appears at the other pole of moulding the material: doubting the validity of absolute principles, value judgements, feasible aims, viable routes, centres of gravity and directions of movement. This is the plight of Postmodernism.

Despite Joyce's constant ironization of the patterns he uses, *Ulysses* and even *Finnegans Wake* still represent significant aspects of High Modernism (as well as incipiant traits of Postmodernism). The border between the two is never a fixed line, it is always a moving belt.

In spite of Cage's occasional performance of making judgements of value and taste, and despite the poetic and musical beauty and excellence of his setting *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* from *Finnegans Wake*, his later rewritings of Joyce's work are model examples of Postmodernism.

What happens to the constructs of Constructivism if its squares and rectangles are cleared away? What happens to the patterns of Cubism if its cubes are removed? They will certainly collapse with the tremendous noise of Cage's *Roaratorio* and will ultimately sink to the silence left behind by Cage's last and soft mesostic in *Writing through Finnegans Wake.* The same polar dichotomy appears in the roaring noise of Cage's *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* (1951) for twelve radios of chance effects of volume and station selection and in his *4' 33''* (1952), a composition of complete silence with the pianist playing nothing and the audience hearing nothing but accidental noises. Annihilating musical sounds as such, the two poles of noise and silence are the ultimate consequences of Cage's idea that "value judgments are destructive" (Kostelanetz, *JCA* 196), and can be taken as negative proofs of the positive claim that a work of art is a specific crystallization of a sensuous value judgement. Cage's observation to the effect that "Given four film phonographs, we can compose and perform a quartet for explosive motor, wind, heart beat, and landslide" (Cage—Kostelanetz, *JCA* 55) expresses something more or less than a

musical ambition. Bartók's integrated model is a far cry from this polarization.

The difference between the Modern and the Postmodern is also conspicuous in Cage's life-long bent on, and application of, universal caricature. Already in Britten's *Purcell Variations* (*The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra: Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell,* first performed in 1946) caricature is not a mere occasional prick or a trend-like thrust, but the means of universal irony. Yet Purcell's ironic presence is obvious in all the variations – as is Homer's in *Ulysses* or Vico's in *Finnegans Wake.* Britten bore no personal grudge against Purcell: he admired, played, conducted and edited his great predecessor's music, and all his irony expressed was his historical distance from Baroque grandeur, sublimity and passion. *Ulysses* can also be viewed as a set of ironic variations on a Homeric theme, and *Finnegans Wake* can also be considered as a cyclic series of ironic variations on a Viconian subject. Purcell's hornpipe (Rondeau) from *Abdelazer*, even in its utterly ironized transformation by the percussion section of Britten's orchestra, remains the organizing principle and structural pattern of Britten's Modernist variations, just as Homer's *Odyssey* and Vico's *Principles of a New Science of Nations*—even in their most double-edged, multiple-layered and twisted transmutations—provide a firm framework for *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake.* Britten's set of witty variations start in D minor and end in a clear and bright D major.

In Cage's *Credo in Us* (1942), however, a composition for percussion quartet, tin cans, piano, radio and phonograph/record-player, the situation is quite different. In the first part, the choice of theme is left to chance: it can be the work of any "traditional" composer from Beethoven to Dvořák, Sibelius or Shostakovich, whom Cage held in low esteem. In its first, highly acclaimed Hungarian performance at the Hungarian Academy of Music on 30 December, 1999, by Zoltán Kocsis and the Amadinda percussion ensemble, the opening theme was "The Waltz of Flowers" in D major from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker.* In the sarcastic middle part, the percussion group and the piano (here also used as a percussion instrument) beat and break the theme into splinters with extraordinary energy and rhythmic variety. The actual target of irony is once again

accidental: it changes with the theme chosen. The general target is, of course, musical tradition as such. In the third part, the original theme returns—"The Waltz of Flowers," to avoid even the semblance of firm tonality, is accidentally transposed to C-sharp major—, but now it is completely ironized and annihilated (just as the slightly modified representation of the initial breakfast theme at the end of Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* represents the customary reliability of traditional reality as highly questionable because of the irrational eruption of volcano violence in the middle part of the play). Being accidental and unforeseen, the traditional melody does not and cannot organize the structure of the middle section. It does not and cannot even provide an ironic *pattern.* All it offers is an ironic *relationship.* Cage's universal caricature is Postmodern already at this early stage (even if it precedes Britten's *Purcell Variations* by a few years), and reaches its disruptive peak when Cage later substitutes accidental noise or accidental silence for actual music. In the presence of a particular audience, however, the absence of music—with occasional coughs from people in the concert hall or with incidental segments of sentences from the radio or even from the corridor—can be interpreted, in fact, "sold" as a performance of music only once.

Experimenting with non-traditional media, Cage has also hit upon the idea that "When a fly buzzes past me now I have, from an artistic point of view, a frightful problem. But it's quite reasonable to imagine that we will have a loudspeaker that will be able to fly through space." (Barnes—Kostelanetz, *JCA* 49) In his tape collage *Rozart Mix* (1965) for thirteen tape machines and six live performers, the sounds on 88 loops have been divided into categories A, B, C, D, E, F representing "country sounds, electronic or synthetic sounds, city sounds, wind-produced sounds, and sounds so small they required amplification." (Kostelanetz, *JCA* 19) In 1970–71 Cage wrote in his "Diary: How to Improve the World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse") that "paper should be edible, nutritious," (Hailes—Perloff and Junkerman, *JCCIA* 229) and he, in fact, collected field grass and created edible papers. With all these experiments, Cage has paved the way for Stoppard's playfully ironic play *Artist Descending a Staircase* (Stoppard, *ADS* 111, 119, 120, 126–7).

What is the rigidity of rule from one point of view is the caprice of chance from another aspect. Let this duality be exemplified by a witty story from Cage's "Indeterminacy" in his volume *Silence*. The anecdote is perchance a clearer Postmodern *ars poetica* than are all his pronouncements about the impossibility of all traditional means of music, the alleged error of Beethoven (Cage—Kostelanetz, *JCA* 81–3), and the need for rewriting experience in terms of mesostics or *I Ching* chance operations.

The story concerns a conductress who discovered that there was a surplus passenger on the crowded Manchester—Stockport bus. She asked who the last passenger was. Nobody answered. She gained the assistance of the driver and later of an inspector, yet all passengers kept quiet. After some time of general silence, the conductress, the driver and the inspector got off the bus to find a policeman. In their absence, a little man arrived asking whether that was the bus to Stockport. The passengers told him it was, so he got on the bus. The conductress, the driver and the inspector came back with a policeman, who, with the rigour of law and the righteousness of rule, asked in an officious and official tone who the last passenger on was.

The little man said, "I was." The policeman said, "All right, get off." All the people on the bus burst into laughter. The conductress, thinking they were laughing at her, burst into tears and said she refused to make the trip to Stockport. The inspector then arranged for another conductress to take over. She, seeing the little man standing at the bus stop, said, "What are you doing there?" He said, "I'm waiting to go to Stockport." She said, "Well, this is the bus to Stockport. Are you getting on or not?" (Cage, *S* 271; cf. Hayles—Perloff and Junkerman, *JCCIA* 226–41)

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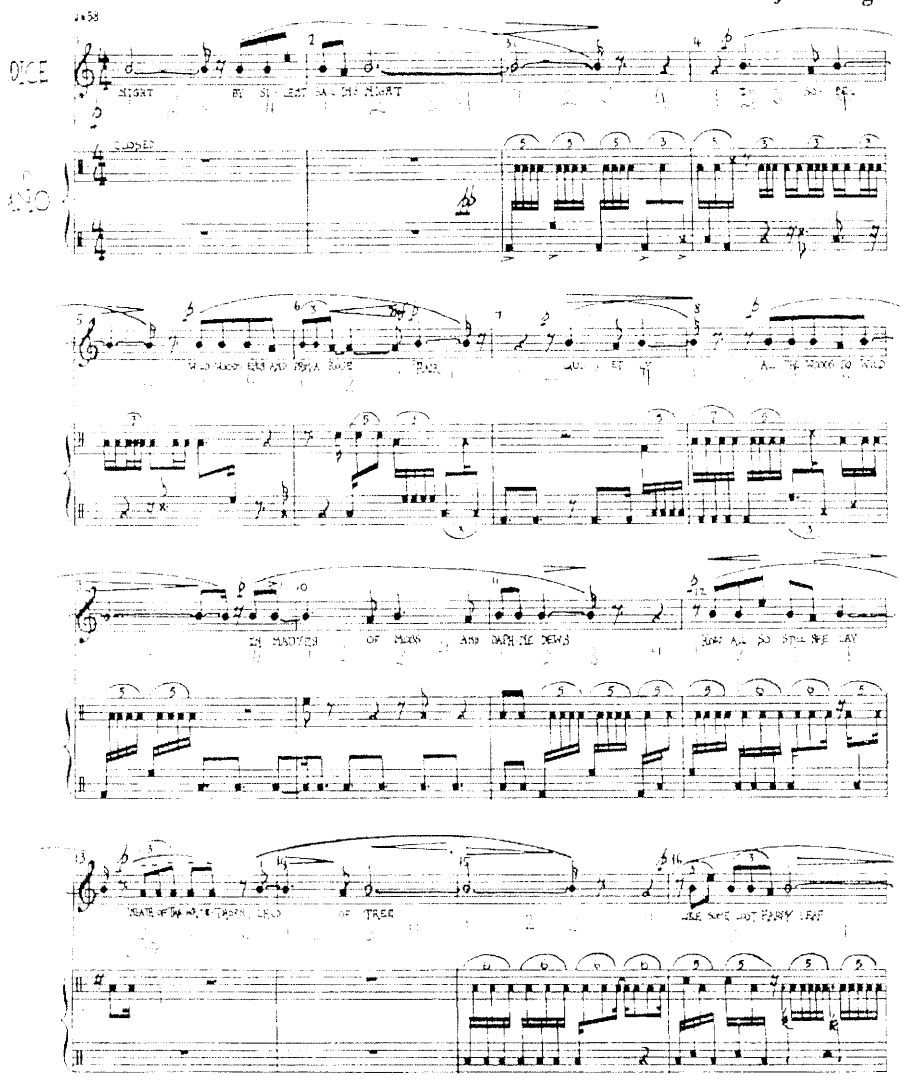
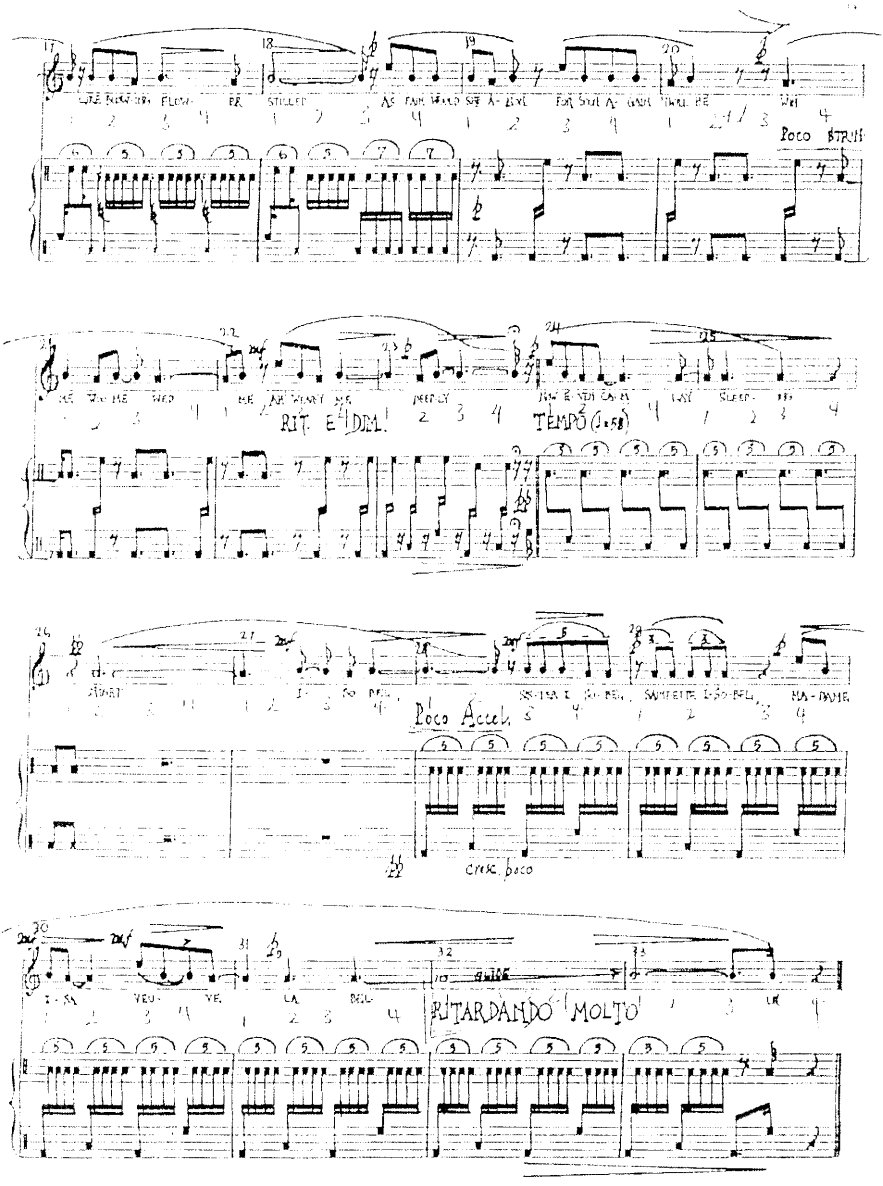
THE WONDERFUL WIDOW OF EIGHTEEN SPRINGS

John Cage

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CONVERSATIONS WITH RAYMOND FEDERMAN: *TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT* AND *THE VOICE IN THE CLOSET*

This is part of a tape-recorded interview conducted in the Debrecen Center of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on 19 February 1986, when Raymond Federman visited Kossuth University as part of a highly successful lecture tour in Hungary. Professor Federman kindly revised the transcript of our conversation. In this part of the interview—published here for the first time—he discusses Take It or Leave It *and* The Voice in the Closet. *Some other sections of our book-size talks have already been published separately. The "chapter" principally addressed to fiction generally ("An Interview with Raymond Federman") is available in* Modern Fiction Studies *(34.2 [1988]: 157–70)—while the Hungarian version of the same section, complemented with the discussion of* Smiles on Washington Square, *is accessible in Hungarian, in* Világregény—regényvilág: amerikai íróinterjúk *("The Novel of the World—The World of the Novel: Conversations with American Writers"; Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 1997. 213–51). The section devoted to* Double or Nothing *has also been published in English ("Conversations with Raymond Federman:* Double or Nothing." Happy Return Essays for István Pálffy. *Ed. Péter Szaffkó and Tamás Bényei. Debrecen: KLTE, 1999. 270–78.).* The Twofold Vibration *segment was carried by the Federman issue of* Experimental Fiction *("Twofold Welcome to Raymond Federman." 23 (2002): 139–59.).*

* * *

Q: Take It or Leave It has a French version, *Amer Eldorado* that immediately preceded it. How do the two relate to each other?

FEDERMAN: First let me explain that the two books were not written one after another, but simultaneously. The French and English versions of this book progressed at the same time, or rather I should say alternated one day to the other as I kept writing. However, *Amer Eldorado* was published first (in Paris in 1974), and then I spent a couple more years working with the English version which became *Take It or Leave It*, but which also became quite a different book, in length as well as in structure and in texture. In a way, even though the two books tell basically the same story, they are overlapping texts. This is, of course, another aspect (personal and unique) of my work, the fact that I write both in French and in English, and that I even translate myself from one language to the other. But to answer your question. After I finished *Double or Nothing*, I wanted to continue the story of the young man who comes to America from France, but this time I wanted to go beyond the threshold of America (*Double or Nothing* basically relates only the arrival of the young man), I wanted to write the story of the young man *in* America, his discovery of America. By chance it happened that I was in Paris (directing some graduate program the university had there), and again by pure chance I had found a room in a little hotel called *Hôtel des deux Continents*. I immediately saw the possibility of a dual text, a bilingual novel coming out of this place. What irony! Hotel of the two continents. And so I started writing a novel in French and in English simultaneously. I even visualized the book finished and published in a beautiful bilingual edition where the two texts would echo one another, the two stories overlap and mix, and become one huge text speaking with a plural voice. Not unlike, in fact, what I eventually did with *The Voice in the Closet*. That does not mean, however, that the French and English texts are exact duplications of one another. I was writing the same story in French and in English, but I was not repeating the same words—the words were different. I was not translating, I was transacting. One day the French would feed the English, and the next day the English would inspire the French. It was maddening, because one text was always ahead of the other, or one

text always behind the other. I went on like that for almost a year. I was going crazy in that hotel room, because gradually the twin-texts not only were feeding each other but also destroying one another. It was a most interesting and revealing experience. I don't think I have yet recovered from it. It has affected everything I have written since then.

Q: Destroying in what sense?

FEDERMAN: In the sense that the two texts were not only feeding one another, but eating one another (to pursue a bad metaphor). Or if you prefer, they were cannibalizing one another. Damn, I can't get out of this culinary metaphor! You see, there were things which did not work in one language but worked in the other. Let me explain. From the window of my hotel room (by the way the hotel was on rue Jacob, right next door to Les Editions du Seuil—all this is in the book), I could see inside the building across the courtyard, I mean inside the offices of the Editions du Seuil, the famous French publishing house. And there, one day I saw the guys from the TEL QUEL GROUP—Philippe Sollers, Jean Ricardou, Marcelyn Pleynet, and so on. They were all there, having a heated discussion. The TEL QUEL GROUP was in power then in the literary milieu of Paris. And it occurred to me as I watched them that the French version of the book I was writing was addressed to them, that in fact they were the "listeners" of that text. But of course, that did not work in the English text. In *Take It or Leave It*, the listeners became, perhaps, the guys from the *Partisan Review* clique. In any event, it is then that I realized that these listeners (whether from the TEL QUEL GROUP or the *Parisian Review* clique) were activating the text I was writing, feeding it material and inspiration with the questions they were asking of the narrator. They became an integral part of the text. As I said, *Amer Eldorado* was published in 1974, and I worked for another two years on the English text of *Take It or Leave It* before it was ready for publication. There are other important differences between the two books. For one thing the French version is about 200 pages long, whereas the English version is close to 500 pages (I don't really know exactly since there are no page numbers in that book). This means that the English version more than doubled in size. This is because a

second narrative level was introduced in the novel. *Amer Eldorado* is basically told in the first person, whereas *Take It or Leave It* moves back and forth from a third person to a first person narrative. Therefore there is more interplay between the narrator (the second-hand teller, as he is called) and the protagonist. Also, the English text has much more elaborated typographical designs than the French. Perhaps the way to understand the relation between these two books is to say that *Amer Eldorado* is contained in *Take It or Leave It* in a loosely adapted English version—not as a translation, but as a free adaptation. Incidentally, the pages of *Amer Eldorado* are numbered. I don't know if this kind of work, this kind of literary elaboration and duplication of a text in two languages has ever been done before, but for me it was a most revealing experience.

Q: In Take It or Leave It you call your book a "battle against the linearity of syntax," where "the pages become the syntax." Is this another way of putting the shuffle-novel idea or is it something else?

FEDERMAN: No, it has nothing to do with the idea of the shuffle-novel. Remember when I said earlier that in *Double or Nothing* I was looking at language and designing it in order to explore all its possibilities? By the time I finished that book I think I knew what the English language could do for me and what I could do with it. It had been over twenty years since I started to learn English, but it was not until I finished *Double or Nothing* that I became aware that I had appropriated that language, and that now I could use it and even abuse it in my work. I could now write sentences which would be my own. So what I did in *Take It or Leave It* was to explore the possibilities of syntax, or rather syntactical topology. Yes, in a way I engaged in a "battle" with and against traditional syntax, and especially against the linearity of syntax. I wanted to see if it were possible to write sentences without shape, sentences which would go on and on and would digress from their grammatically predetermined course. In this sense the book is more a syntactical experiment (even though it remains visual in places) than a typographical experiment.

Q: Kostelanetz refers to your "individually defined pages" as "visual prose." The prevalence of the visual and the typographic elements may also define your early work as concrete prose. Can you accept this term?

FEDERMAN: I'm not sure the expression "concrete prose" is appropriate for my work. It's true I did write some concrete poetry which perhaps grew out of my fiction, but I don't think that the visual and typographical aspects of my work have anything to do with what goes on in Concrete Poetry as it has been defined, let's say, by Haroldo de Campo in Brazil, who was the first to use the expression for this kind of poetry. I prefer the term "visual" to "concrete." I think some people were too quick in connecting concrete music with concrete poetry, but when it comes to the novel, I don't think it can be called concrete just because of its unusual typography. The novel cannot evacuate meaning as concrete poetry does, or else it would really die. I think it is important to realize that what made my novels possible (and of course this is true of all novels which also play with typography) was the typewriter. The action of the typewriter is an integral part of the writing process, of the creative process in my work. In those days I was not working with a word-processor, but I could easily claim that, in writing *Double or Nothing* and *Take It or Leave It,* I invented the possibilities of the word-processor as we use it today.

Q: What are the functions you want the typographical play to fulfill? Graphic presentation of an idea as a new source of aesthetic pleasure? Or fuller reader-participation by forcing us to concentrate harder since automatic reading habits are frustrated?

FEDERMAN: Several of these functions. The first one—expressed in my Surfiction essay—was to challenge reading habits. I am convinced that many readers feel a sense of frustration and boredom when they confront a 600 page book and know they can only move in it from left-to-right, left-to-right, and down the page. Therefore I wanted to question all this and introduce in it an element of diversity and playfulness—an element of amusement. Another reason was to

render some aspects of the page (and of the language too of course) more visual—painterly you might say—in order to have the reader accept language and writing on their own terms as self-referential. In other words, I wanted to make the language visible so that it would not be transparent and vanish after one has read the meaning supposedly hidden in words. I think also that I started playing with typography and visual language simply because deep inside I am a frustrated painter. Even though I cannot draw or paint, I am deeply involved with the plastic arts as a viewer. I suppose that comes to me from my father who was a painter. But the ultimate reason is more interesting for me because it relates not to painting but to music. As you know, I was a jazz musician at one time, and though I don't play anymore, jazz has remained extremely important in my life and my work. Jazz, of course, is improvisation. The designs in my writing are improvisational. When working on the visual aspect of a page in one of my novels, I have no pre-conceived design in mind. It all happens there, in front of me, as I compose, as I type the page. So that writing a story is not just inventing the situation, the characters, but also inventing the writing of that story, that is to say improvising the mechanism of writing. The result of such a process is that the pages (because they are different from one another) become autonomous. It is in this sense also that discontinuity is created. Each page then becomes a space of improvisation and exploration. As you can see, there are many reasons for experimenting the way I did with typography and the topology of the page. Some of these reasons (or justifications) I confronted while doing the work, and others I discovered after the work was finished.

Q: Part of it may be what you call "the unpredictable shape of typography" in *Take It or Leave It.* For some critics, though, the surprise element of the typographical play became a distraction.

FEDERMAN: Oh, absolutely, it is always unpredictable. ... Distraction, you know, also means "amusement."

Q: Robert Scholes in *Fabulation and Metafiction* speaks about "intentional boredom" in reference to your kind of experiments.

FEDERMAN: That means, I suppose, that either Robert Scholes is happy with the way things are, or totally missed the point of what I was doing since he reacted in the reverse of what I intended. Or else Scholes does not know how to play.

Q: My complaint with unpredictable typography is that it is far from being unpredictable. When a word is suggestive of any typographical possibility, that possibility is bound to be exploited by the typographical game, especially in *Double or Nothing*. And if something predictable is pursued by all means and at whatever length, it will alienate rather than sustain interest.

FEDERMAN: What happened when I sat in front of the typewriter, as I did, day after day, page after page, for more than four years as I was writing *Double or Nothing*, is that sometimes I would spend an entire day working on the same page, designing it over and over again, not knowing where it was going or what it would become. It was either pleasure or fatigue which determined the final shape, the outcome of the page—pleasure in the sense that I felt pleased with the way the page finally looked, aesthetically that is, or fatigue because I couldn't go on any more with that particular page. Some days I did not feel like playing any more. There are pages that may have been pushed too far, and as such locked themselves into a predictable form, and others which I did not push far enough. This was the risk. But the title of the book suggests that much. I was gambling with a mode of writing which could have failed totally.

Q: Visualization and typographical play imply the aspect of spatialization. You have just said that for you the page is a space of exploration. Adopting Sharon Spencer's phrase, Ronald Sukenick describes your *Double or Nothing* as an "architectonic novel." You obviously agree with him regarding the novel as a technological structure with imaginative content, where the technological structure can be improved "to suit the purposes of our imagination" and to alter our perception of the world.

FEDERMAN: I would leave the word "technological" out of my work. I am not a technological person. I have no sense of mechanics. I barely know how a typewriter functions, except that I type very fast. I am not mechanical at all, therefore there is no technological intention in my work.

Q: He means that the novel is also a technological structure.

FEDERMAN: Yes, I know, but still it is purely accidental. What interests me, fascinates me about writing a novel (unlike the short story or poetry, which I have almost completely abandoned), is that when you begin you have no idea where you're going. It's like exploring an unknown region. Ahead of the writer lies a huge empty space which must be filled with words and designs and shapes and geometries. And, of course, time is part of all that. I don't mean the time it takes to write the book, but temporality. In other words, writing fiction is always dealing with time and space, and if along the way the work gains a technological structure, so much the better. My primary concern is to render time and space visible—concrete. That does not mean that even in my more recent novels, which have no typographical or visual designs, there is no concern for time and space. *Smiles on Washington Square* is all about time and space.

Q: Your work is not all technique. Those first two novels handle concrete social problems too, and the centrality of a hinted but repressed private apocalypse during the Holocaust—the extermination of your parents and sisters in Auschwitz—does not escape the reader's attention. And in *The Voice in the Closet*, one begins to grasp fully what you mean by the "unreality of reality" and the "unself" of the self. What you talk about is something that really happened to you and is still happening to the survivor in you. I wonder if the Federman-story is or is not there behind the statement that can otherwise be read as an expression of a deconstructionist aesthetic: "I want to tell a story that cancels itself as it goes"?

FEDERMAN: I suppose my entire existence—surexistence I should say—as a so-called "survivor," but also as a writer (but then writers

are survivors too), has been framed between the necessity and the impossibility of telling *that* story. The same old sad story. And I often wonder if perhaps I have not exploited the Holocaust (and my personal experience of it, direct or indirect as it may have been) in order to be able to write those novels. It disturbs me sometimes to think that I am able to write, that I became a writer because of that sordid affair. It's in this sense that I want to write a story that cancels itself as it goes. A need to tell the story and at the same time to erase it forever. But to push this question further. I often ask myself what was my "real" experience of the Holocaust? Or is it rather an "unreal" experience? After all I survived, I was not physically and even mentally wounded, my wrist has no tattoo, my mind seems to function more or less normally, I was not imprisoned in a concentration camp, did not enter the gas chamber. What am I suffering of? Am I perhaps suffering of not having suffered enough? I recently found part of the answer to these questions in a dream I had. Let me tell you about this dream because I think it is extremely important, for me, but also for my work. You know the movie *Shoah* by Claude Lanzman. It's about the Holocaust. Well, I had the dream before I saw the movie, though of course I must have read about it somewhere. I dreamed that I was having a conversation with Claude Lanzman (I have never met him of course). I assumed that he was a man of my age whose experience of the Holocaust was similar to mine. In this dream I asked Claude Lanzman: why are we, you and I, so obsessed with the Holocaust? You spend a good part of your life making movies about it, and I spend a good part of mine writing novels about it, and yet you and I did not directly suffer from the Holocaust. We have no marks on our bodies, our minds function well. In fact, we live rather good, easy, comfortable lives. And suddenly we reached the same conclusion in the dream: what we suffer of, we both said to each other simultaneously, is an absence—the absence of our parents, brothers and sisters, but also the absence of not having been there totally. Perhaps what we really suffer of is the absence of our own death. And then I woke up. Several months later, I was in Paris, by then I had seen the movie *Shoah* which moved me and disturbed me greatly, and it occurred to me that perhaps I should try to get in touch with Claude Lanzman and tell him about the dream, and also talk to him about his

film. Through a friend of mine in Paris who is a film-maker himself, I managed to get Lanzman's phone number. I dialed the number and the phone started ringing, but suddenly I hung up. My wife, who was in the room at the time, asked, "Why did you hang up?" "I've already spoken with Claude Lanzman," I said, "I don't need to talk to him any more ..." I think ABSENCE is the key term in all this. Something was taken away from me, from us—parents, sisters, brothers, homes, countries, lives—and we were left with an absence in a state of aloneness and loneliness. I think that is perhaps the most important theme in my fiction: aloneness, which is, of course, a form of suffering of an absence. For the rest of our lives, we as survivors must feel it concretely, almost as a presence, if one can reverse the terms. When I sat in the closet alone, when I was a boy, I was not aware then that it was the beginning of my survival but also the beginning of an absence. It is only years later, when I started to write *The Voice in the Closet*, that I realized how loaded with meaning that closet was. Yes loaded with meaning, but also with images, symbols, metaphors. All sort of aesthetic possibilities. Yes, perhaps I have exploited my limited experience of the Holocaust for aesthetic reasons. But it also occurred to me, when I sat down to write that book, in the late 1970s, almost forty years after the original events, that a great deal had already been written about the Holocaust, good and bad, a great deal of it plain exploitation, often reducing the drama to mere melodrama, the tragedy to a mere soap opera. If I am to deal with those events I should try to avoid such reduction. Even though I wanted to write about that aspect of my life which can be called the experience of the Holocaust, I decided that I would never use the word "Jew" in the text, never mention the words "German" or "Nazi." I would never write the words "concentration camp" or "Holocaust." In other words, what I wanted to do is capture the essence of the closet experience in its relation to the Holocaust but outside the specifics of history and of my own personal life. I worked very hard on this rather short text (bilingual text, as you know), for many months, but I think I achieved what I set out to do—not by adding more words, not by melodramatizing, not by expanding with facts and statistics, but on the contrary by reducing, by taking away, by cancelling, by trying to arrive at what is central to the book: absence.

Q: The Voice in the Closet, this painful concentrated and condensed text charged with emotion to a suffocating degree, is primarily, in Charles Caramello's view, the erasure of what happened. I would add that if one compares the novels that precede *The Voice* with those that follow, that book—even if it is another "dis-articulation" as you call it—turns out to be a dividing line in your oeuvre. It seems to be an erasure of several aspects of your earlier prose style, too. It is not only a debate between the survivor's remade self and the surfaced and reburied voice of the past or of the subconscious, but, I feel, it is also your art negotiating its survival. You realize that your fictions "can no longer match" the reality of the past, "verbal delirium" is not enough, and, I would say, a new novelist emerges from "the primordial closet." Is this a correct assessment?

FEDERMAN: I think what you've just said is an amazing analysis not only of my evolution as a writer but of my work too. But let me mention something which in terms of chronology is very important. *Take It or Leave It* was published in 1976, but you realize that the date of publication never corresponds to the date when a manuscript is finished. It takes a year or more for a book to come out. Soon after I finished *Take It or Leave It*, I began writing a new novel. No, not *The Voice in the Closet*, but something which was then called *Winner Take All*. I worked on this for almost two years, though I was not satisfied with what I was writing and where it was going. But what I had really started was what eventually became *The Twofold Vibration*. In between I wrote *The Voice in the Closet*. In 1977, in fact, while I was in France for the year. Perhaps that is the reason why I decided to do the text bilingually. The French and the English were written almost simultaneously. Parts of this twin-text were published in various magazines, and eventually a first version of the entire English text appeared in an issue of the *Paris Review*, I think it was in 1978. But the book itself, the bilingual book appeared in 1979. By then I was working again on the manuscript I had set aside, and now it was called *The Twofold Vibration*. I mention this not only to set the chronology of these books straight, but to point out that indeed *The Voice in the Closet* grew out of an early version of *The Twofold Vibration*, but that it is the writing of *The Voice in the Closet* which made *The Twofold*

Vibration possible as a new departure in my fiction. Therefore, yes, you are right. *The Voice in the Closet* marks the end of one phase, one project, in my work, and the beginning of another. I always think of *Double or Nothing*, *Amer Eldorado*, and *Take It or Leave It* as one project, perhaps even a trilogy. By the time I got into the next project (*The Voice in the Closet*, *The Twofold Vibration*, *Smiles on Washington Square*—these three books also have something in common, if not stylistically at least thematically), ten years had passed since I started *Double or Nothing*, and I felt I could say certain things, make certain pronouncements which I could not have made in the earlier books. With *The Voice in the Closet* I was able to write about my experience of the Holocaust without being sentimental or self-pitying. And I think the same is true of *The Twofold Vibration*, even though the tone there is not as serious as in *The Voice*. I think of the more recent works as being moral books, whereas one could say that *Double or Nothing* and *Take It or Leave It* have a kind of moral irresponsibility. Perhaps that's how it should be with the early work of a writer. One should move from irresponsibility to responsibility—moral as well as aesthetic. Witold Gombrowicz defined this as the process of maturity in a writer. Some writers remain irresponsible and immature their entire writing life, and others move towards responsibility and maturity in their work (I would like to think of myself in that category), and others still begin with responsibility and maturity and have nowhere to go (they are usually boring). I think of *The Twofold Vibration* as a book which goes toward establishing a form of morality about certain historical events. And so your question is crucial, it points to the importance of *The Voice in the Closet* in my work.

Q: If you look back at what took place around *The Voice* as a change, would you say that the change was the result of a conscious effort?

FEDERMAN: Yes a very conscious effort to go beyond what I had done before, not only in terms of style but also of subject matter. It seems to me that before you can call yourself a writer you must write a lot of stuff, all of it being a kind of preparation for the day when you

will be able to say "I am a writer." I think it was not until I began working on *The Voice* that I felt I had become a writer, and that now I could make conscious decisions about what I wrote. Before that a great deal of what was happening in my writing was often accidental, I mean some of the experimental and more outrageous aspects of the early books.

Q: The voice itself in *The Voice in the Closet* is seemingly something spontaneously surfacing in a surrealistic fashion.

FEDERMAN: It is and it is not. The manuscript of *The Voice in the Closet* is a *very big* thing, and in it there is a lot of spontaneous stuff, but as I worked at reducing, deleting, cancelling that text, I shaped, chiseled the spontaneous, one might say, into a very rigid form. The genesis of that text is interesting. In the first draft I worked across the wider side of a regular sheet of paper, and wrote the text in two columns down the page. One column was called THE VOICE the other THE CLOSET. I don't remember which side of the paper each was, but the text of THE VOICE was very abstract, unpunctuated, almost deliberately incoherent, and the text of THE CLOSET was a more or less conventional and even linear punctuated narrative. I worked this way for a while thinking that I could sustain this duality of the text and of the closet. On the one side there was the original closet with the boy in it, and on the other the closet where the writer was writing the boy's story. But gradually the two closets began to overlap, and the two texts merge. It is at this point that I realized that the voices were not separate, but contained in one another, and therefore they had to be abstracted into one another. Very much as a painter goes from a realistic design to total abstraction, I erased, blurred, abstracted the story. What was left then was the essence of that story. That, in fact, is what I wanted to get to: the *essential* of what had happened in the closet. And so I removed punctuation, capital letters, names, syntax even, any element of the language which moved toward discursiveness and narrativeness. What remained was a sort of non-syntactical delirium locked in the design of the pages, the absolute *squareness* of the pages, and inside these squares the words

trembled like leaves. That kind of work does not happen by accident, I assure you, it is carefully crafted.

Q: It seems that up to the point when your art could finally handle what happened—however evasively—you were grappling with a paradox. You had to speak the unspeakable. The imaginative content of your work was to be something that happened in what Ihab Hassan calls the Age of the Unimaginable.

FEDERMAN: I think too much emphasis has been put—not only in my case but in the case of those who have written about that experience of the Holocaust—on the impossibility of writing about it. I could easily write the story of what happened to me and to my family. That story, or a story very much like it, has been told a thousand times. What is more important is why I am refusing to write it in a normal, conventional manner, let's say the way Elie Wiesel writes about the Holocaust? Why have I been reluctant to do this—to give away that story just as it happened, loaded with emotion and sentimentality, and melodrama? The reason I cannot write like that, like Elie Wiesel, is because between the original event and my sitting down to write the story of what happened back in 1942 there is Samuel Beckett, the work of Samuel Beckett. It is impossible for a writer who is serious about what he is doing not to confront the work of Beckett before he begins himself. For me the experience of having read and reread Beckett, and of having spent many years writing about his work, is as crucial in my life as the experience of having somehow escaped the Holocaust. Beckett *changed* me, deeply affected my way of thinking and of writing. When the day came for me to write what I had to write, I knew that I could not do it like Elie Wiesel, even though we shared part of the same experience. That would be too simple. It would mean cheating myself. Beckett showed me that one cannot simply write *the* story, but one must also write the impossibility of writing *the* story, that is to say one must also write the anguish and even the unavoidable failure implicit in all writing. That does not mean that I write like Beckett, or that Beckett had a direct influence on my work, but that Beckett taught me how to think about writing. Reading such novels as *Molloy*, *The Unnamable*, or *How It Is*

taught me that writing fiction is not only what can be expressed but also what cannot be expressed. Writing fiction is always about the necessity and the impossibility of doing it.

Q: Could you point out aspects of your prose where you *depart* from Beckett?

FEDERMAN: In *Molloy*, you remember, there is a remarkable passage, totally gratuitous in terms of the structure of the book, where Molloy is trying to work out a way to suck sixteen stones in order, without sucking the same stone twice. He shuffles them in four pockets, he calculates, tries out other systems, goes through incredible mental gymnastics. It's a most amazing piece of fiction—beautiful, moving, disturbing, funny, sad. And yet one could remove that passage from the book and it would not alter its form in the least. It does not seem essential to the whole, and yet it is the whole of *Molloy*, the book, and Molloy, the character. And when eventually Molloy throws away his stones just when he is on the verge of finding the solution, he erases the whole passage. As one reads this, one goes through an amazing kind of acrobatics—linguistic and intellectual gymnastics. And then it is erased as if nothing happened. The whole thing was for nothing. It's like watching a circus act where an acrobat does difficult and dangerous somersaults but always falls back on his feet, and we have seen perfection. Or same thing with a beautiful ballerina who goes through all the pirouettes and when she stops there is nothing left but the image of perfection. That's how Beckett works. In my own *Double or Nothing* there is a passage towards the end of the book where the narrator (the writer-to-be who wants to lock himself in a room to write the book that you are reading) calculates how many packs of chewing gum he will need in the room in order to survive for a year, and beyond that calculates how many times and how long one can chew a stick of gum, and so on. And he too, like Molloy (and this was, of course, deliberate on my part) goes through an incredible mental gymnastics, but unlike Molloy who leaves us with the image of perfection when he throws away his stones, my acrobat falls flat on his face after he has completed his linguistic somersaults and leaves us with the image of failure. In other words, if you go to the circus or to the ballet, and in the course of the program

the acrobat or the ballerina falls down, what you remember afterwards is not beauty or gracefulness, but clumsiness. In Beckett you remember beauty and grace, and perfection. In my work you are left with deliberate clumsiness and failure. Yes, it is deliberate. As such it is no longer an imitation, or a pastiche, or even a parody of Beckett. It is a way for me and my work to pull away from Beckett, to free myself from his work.

Q: And your intention with this clumsiness, the final effect we leave the circus with? What is it aiming at?

FEDERMAN: Ultimately what it is aiming at is the same thing Beckett is doing. Obviously we are talking about language, always about language. Earlier I quoted this statement: "Language is what gets us where we want to go and prevents us from getting there." Somehow in spite of the obstacle of language Beckett managed to get where he wanted to go. I have a feeling that I have not yet managed to overcome the obstacle of language, and therefore have not yet arrived where I want to go. Beckett, of course, has arrived. There is no question about that. Let's say that I am on my way there. But I may never get there, wherever *there* may be.

ENIKŐ BOLLOBÁS

(DE-)GENDERING AND (DE-)SEXUALIZING FEMALE SUBJECTIVITIES: WOMAN-HATING AND ITS REVISIONS IN LITERATURE AND PAINTING

I dedicate this paper to the memory of my former advisor, Professor Péter Egri, who always inspired his students to bring together the vastly dissimilar—past and present, American and European, verbal and visual, prose and poetry—within one comparative, transcultural and transgeneric, framework. Being a literary—and not *art*—historian, my focus will be literature and will follow a seemingly roundabout way: first I will discuss American and English male misogynist and American female non-misogynist writers, identifying in both cases forms of misogyny that are either present or apparently *absent*. This absence is so conspicuous and striking in the women's work, that its dismissal can be interpreted as a demonstrative act of destroying icons and attitudes that our culture seems to take for granted. As such, it is exactly this absence of misogyny—and the resulting radical act, constructing a respect for women and a love for one's self—that I would name as the staple features of some American women writers—Gertrude Stein, Willa Cather, Djuna Barnes, and H. D. (Hilda Doolittle)—, as well as the contemporary Hungarian born visual artist, Orshi Drozdik.

In the first part of my paper I would like to discuss some classical and familiar forms of misogyny. Misogyny, I propose, is one of the most common, subtle, and covert manifestations of hate crime. In our culture it is a most naturalized sentiment, unnoticed like the air we breath in, yet framing our discussions of personal relationships, sexuality, family dynamics, health and biology, social equality or

inequality, religion, economics, philosophy, journalism—to name only a few fields where the dismissal of the role of women goes quite far.

1. Woman in the texts of male misogyny

Probably the most famous example of male modernist misogyny is T. S. Eliot. The women in his texts have become staple figures of modernity, whose alienation and ennui are only strengthened by the fact that they are affected by this alienation and ennui indirectly, through the men that define them. At best, Eliot's woman character is a lifeless, ghostlike figure, one of those who "come and go / Talking of Michelangelo" ("The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"), or spends her life "serving tea to friends," mourning her lost youth, neurotically twisting lilacs "in her fingers while she talks" ("Portrait of a Lady"). At worst, as throughout *The Waste Land*, she is female hysteria personified, famous for her bad nerves; or she is thirty-one year old yet "antique" looking Lil, whose abortion pills made her lose her teeth but who now will disappoint "poor Albert" for not being able to look good and give him "a good time"; or she is the bored typist making monotonous love with the repulsive "young man carbuncular." The desperate scene of her life includes her stale things left from the morning and the previous day: her kitchen stuff and her feminine "notions":

> The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, light
> Her stove, and lays out food in tins.
> Out of the window perilously spread
> Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays,
> On the divan are piled (at night her bed)
> Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.

The last line seems to give away the misogynist: the items that touch the body he is repulsed by, "[s]tockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays," become repulsive themselves. These are items that supposedly participate in the material construction of femininity, that is, they make the person wearing an underbodice, a corset, stockings, and slippers clearly desirable and desiring in the heterosexual context. Therefore, portraying these feminine notions as graceless and unbecoming parts of a repulsive love scene will evoke disgust not just in their love-making, but the womanliness of this woman too.

Heterosexual hegemony denies the woman a self outside the heterosexual context ("Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass"), yet the self constructed within this context is clearly hideous and ugly. Her place inside the male script is confining and repelling, yet she has no place outside.

Eliot is not without predecessors in the literature of misogyny. The American tradition goes back as far as John Winthrop's portraying Anne Hutchinson's "woman-child" as the devil itself, with "a face, but no head," "over the eyes four horns, hard and sharp," "the nose hooked upward; over the breast and back full of sharp pricks and scales" (Winthrop 262). Or, one could cite Washington Irving and Mark Twain, whose agents of civilization, Dame Van Winkle and the Widow Douglas, so desperately try to curb Rip's and Huck's free-soaring manly spirit that their only ways out become a 20-year sleep or a "lighting out for the territories." English literature is also rich in misogynistic texts, with Jonathan Swift giving one of the more elaborate images of a constructed womanhood. In Swift's case this constructedness carries blatantly negative connotations, and is synonymous with being fake, masked, dishonest, and without substance. The poem I have in mind is "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" (1734), which describes the undressing ceremony of Corinna, "a batter'd, strolling Toast":

> Then, seated on a three-legg'd Chair,
> Takes off her artificial Hair:
> Now, picking out a Crystal Eye,
> She wipes it clean, and lays it by.
> Her Eye-Brows from a Mouse's Hyde,
> Stuck on with Art on either Side,
> Pulls off with Care, and first displays 'em,
> Then in a Play-Book smoothly lays 'em.
> Now dextrously her Plumpers draws,
> That serve to fill her hollow Jaws.
> Untwists a Wire: and from her Gums
> A Set of Teeth completely comes.
> Pulls out the Rags contriv'd to prop
> Her flabby Dugs and down they drop.
> Proceeding on, the lovely Goddess
> Unlaces next her Steel-Rib'd Bodice;
> Which by the Operator's Skill,
> Press down the Lumps, the Hollows fill,

Up goes her hand, and off she slips
The Bolsters that supply her Hips.
With gentlest Touch, she next explores
Her Shankers, Issues, running Sores,
Effects of many a sad Disaster;
And then to each applies a Plaister.
But must, before she goes to Bed,
Rub off the Dawbs of White and Red;
And smooth the Furrows in her Front,
With greasy Paper stuck upon't.
[...]
The Nymph, tho' in this mangled Plight,
Must ev'ry Morn her Limbs unite.
But how shall I describe her Arts
To recollect the scatter'd Parts?
Or shew the Anguish, Toil, and Pain,
Of gath'ring up herself again?
The bashful Muse will never bear
In such a Scene to interfere.
Corinna in the Morning dizen'd,
Who sees, will spew; who smells, be poison'd.

When the text is controlled by a misogynist, the woman becomes a monster. She is without substance; her gendered self is that which is being constructed again and again through the ritual of assembling of its rather vulgar artificial parts. The reader gets a full view of the underside of what Judith Butler calls the "theatricality of gender" (232): the woman wears a wig, her eyes are removable, her eyebrows are mouse hair, her round cheeks are stuffed, her teeth are false, her breasts are raised by rags, her figure is the work of a corset, her skin is smoothed by grease—her whole feminine body is created daily by much "Anguish, Toil, and Pain." Femininity is here portrayed as the result of an elaborate performance, albeit in its negative aspect: through the performance when femininity is being de-created into its supposedly real substance: absence, void, nothingness. Indeed, that there is nothing beneath the de-created image but repulsive vulgarity is what Swift's distancing and alienating irony suggests (and didactically explicates in the last line).

The misogyny conveyed in these texts seems to be part and parcel of sexism, while sexism has proved to be the direct product of heterocentric gender culture, the rigid institutionalized heterosexual

norms of patriarchy, or, in Adrienne Rich's well-known words, "compulsory heterosexuality." As long as women are portrayed as fulfilling heterosexual plots controlled by men, the constructions of womanhood, idolized or debased, are easily subordinated to male interests. As long as women are portrayed as objects of male desire, as passive extras in male quest plots, or simply as occupying the social places left vacant by men, these women have a very good chance of being obliterated from the text, erased and effaced, or relegated into mere decoration at best, or into objects evoking male repulsion at worst.[1] As long as women are denied their stories and appear only as characters in male texts, the perpetuation of heterosexism is unavoidable. "In a sexist culture," Judith Fetterley argues, "the interests of men and women are antithetical, and, thus, the stories each has to tell are not simply alternative versions of reality, they are, rather, radically incompatible" (159–160). Therefore, the misogynist portrayal of women seems to be a predictable and even necessary consequence of heterocentrist gender culture that makes antagonists out of women and men.

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Such major American women modernists as Gertrude Stein, Willa Cather, Djuna Barnes, and H. D. provide alternative scripts to woman hating. As they subvert traditional patriarchal depictions of women by de-gendering and de-sexualizing female subjectivities, these writers ultimately revise and transcend male misogynist representations of femininity. These authors propose loving alternatives: the women portrayed here manage to escape heterosexist hatred, manifest erasure,

[1] The contemporary Hungarian poet Imre Oravecz seems to provide a wealth of examples for this latter case of blatant textual misogyny, especially his 1988 book entitled *September 1972* [*1972. szeptember*]. Here young women are almost always portrayed as having repulsive bodies and genitals, posing an atavistic threat to the man victimized by their mere presence or intimidated into impotence (see the poem "Several times before" [„Előtte többször is"]). Elsewhere women appear as whores and predators, as selfish women with an insatiable sexual desire that, for the man, seems to conflict with what appears as their mask of autonomy, intelligence, and feminism (see the poem "You were not quite" [„Nem voltál egészen"]). In these misogynist texts women become representations of "perversity" by even providing the mental and physical image which helps turn him on and start masturbation (see poem "Now about" [„Most arról"]).

exile, and irony exactly by leaving the heterosexist matrix and entering a world where gender is not produced by heterosexuality. Often it will happen that de-heterosexualization occurs at the price of de-gendering; the product here is an androgynous self or several angrodynous selves capable—as they are in Drozdik's case—of self-loving.

2. Texts of women modernists: woman as text

2.1. Gertrude Stein: the figure of the woman quester

In 1909 Stein privately published *Three Lives*, thereby taking, as she herself put it, "the first definite step away from the nineteenth century and into the twentieth in literature" (*Autobiography* 66). Indeed, the book precedes by several years such landmark works of modernism as *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913), *Dubliners* (1914), *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922), *Jacob's Room* (1922), *The Waste Land* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920).

All chapters of *Three Lives* are unusual in the sense that they do not portray women as participants in institutionalized heterosexuality, in love-and-marriage plots naturalized by romantic and realist fiction. Although the characters have various relationships, the three servant girls—the German Anna, the black Melanctha, and the German Lena—are autonomous beings, who do not need men to give meanings to their lives. Their stories are not heterosexual love stories, but are about the women themselves, their thoughts and desires. Especially Melanctha emerges as a quester (the text uses the word "seeker"), a role in literature previously reserved for men only. Melanctha is, then, the heroine of a female *Bildung*, and has a character as complex and changing as her male predecessors, among them Werther, Julien Sorel, or Raskolnikov.

"Melanctha Herbert was a graceful, pale yellow, intelligent, attractive negress" (82), Stein writes early on, contrasting Melanctha to her more "feminine" friend, Rose, whose laughter "was just ordinary, any sort of woman laughter" (82), and who "had lately married Sam Johnson a decent honest kindly fellow" (82). The life of the autonomous quester is by definition more difficult and complicated than that of a more traditionally "feminine" woman.

> Melanctha Herbert had not made her life all simple like Rose Johnson. Melanctha had not found it easy with herself to make her wants and what she had, agree.
>
> Melanctha Herbert was always losing what she had in wanting all the things she saw. Melanctha was always being left when she was not leaving others.
>
> Melanctha Herbert always loved too hard and much too often. She was always full with mystery and subtle movements and denials and vague distrusts and complicated disillusions.
>
> Then Melanctha would be sudden and impulsive and unbounded in some faith, and then she would suffer and be strong in her repression. (86)

The reader knows next to nothing about Melanctha's physical appearance; her identity is in no sense determined by the preparation of her body for heterosexual romance. Stein describes her in a way in which mostly only men are described: as a wanderer and as a person having desires and pursuits. I would like to suggest this: had we not been informed of Melanctha's gender, we would probably assume that a man is being portrayed here. The less important but more obvious reason for this probable misperception is that her character traits are such as are traditionally used to represent some male "essence": that she is bold and intelligent, "complex" and "desiring" (83), that she "had not loved herself in childhood" (87), that she "had always had a break neck courage" (87), that "it was only men that for Melanctha held anything there was of knowledge and power" (93), or that she would "do [...] things that had much danger" (99). More significantly, our assumption about the person here described being a man would be based on our reading experience gained in a patriarchal, heterocentrist, and often misogynist culture: it is this experience—prompting the knowledge that such characteristics are emphasized in connection with men only—that creates our expectation about the character as gendered male in this text. Stein deflates our expectations by denaturalizing the social constructions of male and female identity, by taking away its "naturalness" as produced in patriarchy. The result is a person whose autonomy and questing selfhood provoke love and respect defying all misogynist expectations.

2.2. Willa Cather: the bare material of androgyny

Willa Cather provides a different example for constructing a non-misogynist text. Almost all of her novels are unusual with respect to the absence of the heterosexual love plot (the only exception being the little known first novel *Alexander's Bridge*). In two of the novels especially Cather has provided clear alternatives to the familiar drama of heterosexual love, *The Song of the Lark* (1915) and *My Ántonia* (1918). In the first Cather's job was easier: the genre of the *Künstlerroman* needed to be re-gendered for Thea Kronborg, the passionate and determined opera singer, and have her subordinate her heterosexual desire to music.

No such obvious replacements would have been sufficient in *My Ántonia*. Here the male narrator and the female protagonist are representatives of some shared androgynous ideal. Jim and Ántonia are childhood friends on the Nebraska frontier; here, away from a society that constructs gender, they can afford to be neither "masculine" nor "feminine," but have an androgynous self that precedes this gendering. The frontier provided the setting for Cather's "*démeublé*" ideal, to use her word from her 1936 essay, "The Novel Démeublé," in which she discusses leaving "the scene bare for the play of emotions, great and little" (287). This is the "underfurnished" world *par excellence*, where "[t]here was nothing but land: not a country at all, but the material out of which countries are made" (7). Unlike in traditional texts relating the myth of origin of the frontier, here the prairie obliterates the men: Ántonia's father commits suicide, while Jim first feels "erased, blotted out" (8), "dissolved into something complete and great" (14), and then leaves for the city. Although it is Jim's text, Ántonia does not get to be erased, but rather, against this background of bare material substance she is given elemental presence. It is the woman who gets to be inscribed upon the blank page of the frontier. Her work, her passion for wide spaces, her tirelessness in "serving generous emotions" (227), and her commitment to survival: these are the components of her androgynous identity that make her one with the land—help her feel at home as well as leave her mark here.

Always remaining outside the heterosexual love plot, Cather manages to celebrate the deep attachment of Jim and Ántonia, "the

precious, the incommunicable past" (238), without nostalgia and sentimentalism because this Eden has not been lost, but rather inscribed upon the land *as* Ántonia: she appears for Jim as text leaving images in the mind and firing the imagination.

2.3. Djuna Barnes: transgressions of gender and sexuality

Djuna Barnes still remains one of the most enigmatic figures of female modernism. Her most important novel is *Nightwood* (1936), with a mesmerizing mystery for its protagonist, Robin Vote. A "tall girl with the body of a boy" (46), she is one of the most memorable androgynes in modernist fiction: both quester and desired other, autonomous yet produced in sexual relationships, she always transgresses whatever boundaries she encounters. As woman quester, seeker, and wanderer, she is after selfhood and knowledge that lie beyond the bounds of patriarchy; as the desired other, however, she fulfills the role cast for women in patriarchy.

The reader's first encounter with Robin happens during a doctor's visit: "in white flannel trousers" and "in a moment of threatened consciousness [...] lay the young woman, heavy and disheveled" (34).

> The perfume that her body exhaled was of the quality of that earth-flesh, fungi, which smells of captured dampness and yet is so dry, overcast with the odour of oil of amber, which is an inner malady of the sea, making her seem as if she had invaded a sleep incautious and entire.
>
> Her flesh was the texture of plant life, and beneath it one sensed a frame, broad, porous, and sleep-worn, as if sleep were a decay fishing her beneath the visible surface. About her head there was an effluence as of phosphorous glowing about the circumference of a body of water—as if her life lay through her in ungainly luminous deteriorations—the troubling structure of the born somnambule, who lives in two worlds—meet of child and desperado. (34–5)

She is indeed an unusual being: neither human nor beast really, she exhibits a plant-like existence and occupies a very peculiar dimension of consciousness. Being and not being at the same time, conscious and unconscious, in the elements of light, water, and earth, in the room as well as the jungle, predator as well as victim, Robin appears in all her contradictions. Not one cell of her body can be labeled as "feminine," yet Felix, who accompanies the doctor, immediately falls in love with

her because he recognizes her as a complete and sovereign being. Although Robin's gender identity is incidental—or, one could say, hers in an androgyny that just *happens to be* gendered feminine—the desire of Felix is heterosexualized in such a way that its object is but a part of plant, animal, and androgynous-human nature and not a person with a socially produced gender.

> She closed her eyes, and Felix, who had been looking into them intently because of their mysterious and shocking blue, found himself seeing them still faintly clear and timeless behind the lids—the long unqualified range in the iris of the wild beasts who have not tamed the focus down to meet the human eye.
>
> The woman who presents herself to the spectator as a "picture" forever arranged is, for the contemplative mind, the chiefest danger. Sometimes one meets a woman who is a beast turning human. Such a person's every moment will reduce to an image of a forgotten experience; a mirage of an eternal wedding cast on the racial memory [...] (37)

Robin Vote's subjectivity is not only *not* constrcuted by a heterosexual romance plot (as female subjectibities are in patriarchal texts), but, being the person desired by just about all characters in the novel, actually transcends all binarisms of gender and sexuality. What Barnes seems to suggest is that gender identity has nothing to do with desire or eroticism. This thesis is supported by several stories of the doctor, among them the one about the sailor falling in love with the French girl without legs—only because of the way the sun was shining over her back.

> [...] which reminds me of Mademoiselle Basquette, who was damned from the waist down, a girl without legs, built like a medieval abuse. She used to wheel herself through the Pyrenees on a board. What there was of her was beautiful in a cheap traditional sort of way, the face that one sees on people who come to a racial, not a personal, amazement. [...] a sailor saw her one day and fell in love with her. She was going uphill and the sun was shining all over her back; it made a saddle across her bent neck and flickered along the curls of her head, gorgeous and bereft as the figurehead of a Norse vessel that the ship has abandoned. So he snatched her up, board and all, and took her away and had his will [...] (26)

In the memorable final scene of the novel Robin, "in her boy's trousers" (169), tames Nora's dog by going down "on all fours,

dragging her knees" and starting to bark. She appears again as the ultimate transgressor, who cuts through genders and even species, deconstructing a whole epistemology based on the rigid binarisms of human/animal, presence/absence, day/night, or life/death.

2.4. H. D.: undifferentiated self

H. D.'s *HERmione*, written in 1927 but not published until 1981, is a most intriguing novel, where the author probably went furthest of all women experimentalist—the "sapphic expatriate set" (Jay 76)—in portraying a woman's selfhood outside the bounds of both the heterosexual and the homosexual matrix. The story is highly autobiographical, depicting the two failed relationships of the very young Hermione Gart of Pennsylvania: both the romance with bohemian poet George Lowndes and the "sister-love" between Her and Fayne Rabb end in betrayals. However, the open-ended narrative allows for the continuation of the love between the two women. By the end, Her will find her autonomous self independent of either of these two relationships, and her selfhood will become scripted on the virginal snow.

Her "failure to conform" and to be regular is played out in the pun H. D. exploits all through, but especially in the first half of the novel. As homonym of a subject's proper name (HERmione) and the accusative/dative declension form of the third person personal pronoun, "Her" is at once grammatical subject and object, folding, as it were, in itself selfhood as both subject and object. However, with the pronoun constantly distanced and alienated into proper name, the identity of the accusative/dative and subjective forms defamiliarizes reference. Hermione experiences herself, as Shari Benstock puts it, as a "grammatical error," recognizing in herself "a multiplicity of selves that language cannot simultaneously name" (337).

Neither of Hermione's selves seem ever to conform to the norms of gender. She is never really "feminine" for George: "You never manage to look decently like other people [...] [y]ou look like a Greek goddess or a coal scuttle," he tells her (64). Her selfhood is fluid enough to include identification with the trees of her home state, Pennsylvania, and its whole landscape. But this identification is based primarily on her self-perception as trace, map, or script—as readable as the landscape.

> The woods parted to show a space of lawn, running level with branches that, in early summer, were white with flower. Dogwood blossom. Pennsylvania. Names are in people, people are in names. Sylvania. I was born here. People ought to think before they call a place Sylvania.
>
> Pennsylvania. I am part of Sylvania. Trees. Trees. Trees. Dogwood, liliodendron with its green-yellow tulip blossoms. Trees are in people. People are in trees. Pennsylvania. (5)

George does not prove to be the right man for a tree-woman. He "would never make a pear tree burst into blossom" (171), since he only desires a selfless Hermione, a kind of a generically gendered "Her" rather than this particular person: "He wanted Her, but he wanted a Her that he called decorative" (172). In this relationship conforming to the norms of "romantic thralldom" (see DuPlessis), the man fails to see the multiplicity and fluidity of Hermione's selfhood, or understand that the indeterminacy and instability of her gendering does in no way go counter to her own desire to assert her selfhood.

However appealing at first, the "concentric intimacy" (164) of Her Gart and Fayne Rabb also proves to be a threat to Her's selfhood. At the end she frees herself from this bond too, only to find that she can now start to write her own text: "Her feet were pencils tracing a path through a forest" (223). Folding now, both in language and also in the woods, subject and object in an act of creativity, she starts to write her own text: "Now the creator was Her's feet, narrow black crayon across the winter whiteness" (223). Ungendered and sexually undifferentiated, she becomes text.

This is the context where I would place Orshi Drozdik: among women artists who revised notions of the female subjectivity in ways unimaginable by their male contemporaries. They not only portrayed gender as constructed or performed, tying existing gender formations to heterosexual hegemony, but also pursued transgressions of categories of both gender and sexuality. They located realms of androgynous subjectivities that were undifferentiated both in terms of gender and sexuality. For if binary gender categories entail heterocentrism, which in turn is the locus of misogyny, then androgyny means the loving abandonment of both gender and sexual differentiation—bringing about, instead, multiple, transgressive, fluid, and unstable subjectivities in interaction. Ownership of the text is

intimately tied to the construction of the woman outside the heterosexual matrix: when a non-gendered and non-sexualized matrix is created for the selves to come out and interact with each other to become text.

3. Drozdik: self love, love of the female selves

The processes captured in Droznik's pieces seem all too familiar culturally. Here too, the heterosexual matrix is excluded—or, more precisely, only evoked satirically, as in her various *Love Letters*. The one written *To a Leyden Jar*, for example, ironically signifies upon heterosexual romance, with all its paraphernalia. The elements of this satirical signifying include the male heterosexual ideal (the jar has "handsome body," "well-set shoulders," with "elegant, sinuous forms"; has "the power of electricity" stored in his body), the genre of yearning love letters, the tradition—defined by the separation of subject and object, loving and loved—of "romantic thralldom" ("I have given everything I had to give," she writes) as well as the erotic perception of the desired object (the woman having her "hand slipping up and down your shining surface"). A later work also falls into this category: *Young and Beautiful* is an ironic representation of gender-performance.

Instead of the heterosexual context, we seem to have an ideal of internal double: hermaphrodism is elevated to the status of "perfection" only found in nature, formerly known as the site and embodiment of the heterosexualized feminine ideal (as in *Natural Philosophy, Fragmenta Natural, Taxonomy, The Sexual System of Plants, after Linnaeus*, 1990). On many pieces, the *autosexual* is performed. The female is duplicated, most often it is the female self who enters into playful interaction with herself (as in *Individual Mythology*, 1976–77, or the late-70s video *Double*). The dancers of *Individual Mythology* are superimposed upon one another, to create a tumultuous world of fleeting woman selves: they seem to enjoy the company of each other, have a very good time there, desiring and satisfying desire at the same time. I hear the prominent African American modernist writer, Zora Neale Hurston, echoed in these pieces: "I love myself when I am laughing."

The female experimental artist has primarily her own body to work with; this body is Drozdik's primary material too, capable of

performing all kinds of roles and constructing all kinds of subjectivities. *Manufacturing the Self*, the series title insists: these are my favorite pieces, where the "body self" is being created at the crossroads of the anatomical atlas and adolescent curiosity, of science and erotics. Knowledge and desire compete here for the construction of the body—which ultimately can be possessed by no one else but the woman herself. The best part of Droznik—as well as of the female writers I discussed previously—is their playfulness, irony, satirical celebration—the way utter seriousness in generated by self-duplication, self-abandon, self-pleasure, self-love—coupled with the willingness and courage not to take oneself seriously.

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JUDIT BORBÉLY

THE WRITER'S PAINTINGS AND THE PAINTER'S SCENES

'To the art of the brush the novel must return, I hold, to recover whatever may be still recoverable of its sacrificed honour,' Henry James writes in 'The Lesson of Balzac,' giving voice to his lifelong conviction that there is an undeniable analogy between literature and painting (*Literary Criticism: French Writers etc.* 136). The novelist and the painter are brothers in James's eyes, since, as he formulates it in 'The Art of Fiction', 'their inspiration is the same, their process (allowing for the different quality of the vehicle) is the same, their success is the same' (*Selected Literary Criticism* 51). The sceptic of a sarcastic turn of mind may say, of course, that it is nothing but sour grapes, for Henry James could not help admitting, unwillingly though, that as regards drawing, his humble attempts were inferior to his brother's artistic achievements, and thus he had to content himself with writing. It is certainly true that it was his brother, William, who had private lessons with Mr Coe, the art teacher at school in New York, where the young Henry could only see William in the back parlour, drawing, always drawing and to make matters worse, 'not with a plodding patience, which, I think, would less have affected me, but easily, freely, and [...] infallibly,' he remembers the early days in his *Autobiography* (*Autobiography* 118). Several years later, when the family settled in Newport, the 17-year-old Henry James finally got compensated for his possible sibling jealousy on meeting John La Farge, the painter, who opened new windows for him. Himself being well-versed in literature, La Farge introduced the young man to Browning and Balzac, and even encouraged him to translate

Merimee's *La Venus d'Ille*, thus leading James to realise that literature is no less art than painting, consequently 'even with canvas and brush whisked out of my grasp I still needn't feel disinherited' (*Autobiography* 294). And it was also La Farge who discerned Henry James's inborn talent for seeing with the painter's eye.

James's attraction to pictures was obvious already at a very young age, together with his habit of connecting pictures and real living scenes. Under the influence of a concrete experience he usually remembered a picture he had seen which, in turn, helped him to interpret the reality around him. We might say that he had the tendency to see an actual scene as if it were a picture. His conscious interest and studies in art obviously gave it further reinforcement but, judging by his earliest memory of Paris that he recalls in his *Autobiography*, he must have been born with the painter's eye:

> I had been there for a short time in the second year of my life, and I was to communicate to my parents later on that as a baby in long clothes, seated opposite to them in a carriage on the lap of another person, I had been impressed with the view, framed by the clear window of the vehicle as we passed, of a great stately square surrounded with high-roofed houses and having in its centre a tall and glorious column. (Autobiography 32)

Besides being fascinated by the strength of Henry James's visual sense, we must underline a small detail in the above quotation: the view being framed by the window. Framing a scene is typical of James, as we will see, and it is used to its greatest effect at climactic moments of recognition when, in Viola Hopkins Winner's words, 'sight merges with insight' (Hopkins 73). That James was visually stimulated is not surprising, for he frequently accompanied his father to the studios of the latter's artist friends, contemporary painters and illustrators (Thomas Hicks, Felix Darley, Christopher Cranch and Paul Duggan), as we can read in the *Autobiograhy*. Furthermore, as a child, he was regularly taken to art exhibitions, and later, already as an adult, he consciously explored the great museums and galleries of Europe, so much so that the National Gallery, the Louvre, the Uffizi, the Pitti all became his second home. To have some conception of James's exquisite sensitivity to art and to see what ineffaceable impression the temples of art made on him, let me quote his first memories of the Louvre from 1855 when he was but 12 years old:

> [...] the sense of a freedom of contact and appreciation really too big for one [left] such a mark on the very place, the pictures, the frames themselves, the figures within them, the particular parts and features of each, the look of the rich light, the smell of the massively enclosed air, that I have never since renewed the old exposure without renewing again the old emotion and taking up the small scared consciousness. (*Autobiography* 198)

This quotation shows not only the crucial role the Louvre played in his aesthetic development and the effect of art on his perception but also the interplay between picture and reality that characterises Henry James's vision. .As we can see, the concrete physical setting where the pictures were placed, the light and even the frames were just as memorable for him as the paintings themselves. This fusion of art and the living present can be found in his art criticism as well where he always discusses a work of art in context, which means on the one hand the 'contribution' of the surrounding pictures to the quality and interpretation of the one in question, and on the other the larger context, i.e. the gallery itself, the area where the gallery is situated, the audience, the owner of the painting and sometimes even the fee to be paid. (As an example, I can mention James's discussion of the Wallace Collection at Bethnal Green that he wrote for the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1873 in which we can find all these details, along which he then strings his exhaustive analysis of a number of paintings.) The emphatic interrelationship between art and reality sheds light on the complexity of the painter's eye in Henry James. For it means more than his sensitivity to colours and forms; James's visual sense is strongly connected with his imagination, he does not merely *see* something but *thinks* about it. In other words, pictorial elements are never separated from intellectual meaning. In his art criticism, he was most positive about paintings which, in his opinion, showed *beauty* found by a painter with *imagination* in an observable *reality*, imagination in this case depending on the presence of literary, historical and psychological associations raised in the beholder. That is why the ekphrastic scenes I have selected are so rich, as I hope to show, and are open to various interpretations.

The wealth of artistic connotations in James's works makes it really hard to pretend to have found a logical organising principle if you want to analyse certain scenes approaching them from this

particular angle but you want to avoid ending up with a hopelessly complicated mass of encyclopaedic information. After much thinking I decided to set up three aspects on the basis of which I am going to compare scenes and pictorial works of art, three different types of ekphrasis, types, of course, by my personal judgement. The first one is the physical appearance of a concrete painting in the novel; in the second one a living scene can be suspected to have been inspired by a painting which is then either explicitly named or can be detected; whereas in the third type I would like to introduce a scene in which James does not 'use' an existing painting but he himself creates one, giving a beautiful example of a literary painting.

I think, the best-known painting actually appearing in a Henry James novel is the Bronzino in *The Wings of the Dove*, which Milly Theale, the central heroine comes face to face with in the great historic house of Matcham. The mysterious Bronzino has been identified as the portrait of Lucrezia Panciatichi by the Florentine painter, Bronzino (Agnolo di Torri), who painted several portraits of the Florentine aristocracy of the time before he became the court painter of the Medicis. The portrait is a wonderful piece of 16th-century Italian Mannerism, a painting that Giorgio Vasari, the contemporary art historian, praised for its 'bella maniera'. Mannerism, as the word suggests, aimed to achieve some ideal manner, i.e. the perfect style, for the sake of which mannerist artists used stylised forms by ignoring rules of perspective, proportions and symmetry. Their figures, which usually have long limbs and a small head, are mostly depicted in an unnaturally sophisticated or rigid posture, as we can see in Lucrezia Panciatichi's portrait as well. But Bronzino managed to combine these typically mannerist formal elements with intense emotions: there is some concealed tension and sadness on the lady's face, in her slightly strained left hand and in her somewhat uncomfortable way of sitting, which are in a strong contrast with the bright red of her dress. Let us see now how the painting is described by James, communicated through his heroine's perception:

> [...] the face of a young woman, all magnificently drawn, down to the hands, and magnificently dressed; a face almost livid in hue, yet handsome in sadness and crowned with a mass of hair rolled back and high, that must, before fading with time, have had a family resemblance to her own. The lady in question, at all events, with her

> slightly Michaelangelesque squareness, her eyes of other days, her full lips, her long neck, her recorded jewels, her brocaded and wasted reds, was a very great personage—only unaccompanied by a joy. And she was dead, dead, dead. (The Wings 144)

James's description of the portrait summarises all the pictorial details I have listed above, and it also shows his sensitivity to the deeper meaning, the hidden psychological message. The given Bronzino, which comes to symbolise mortality because the visible elegance and perfection cannot mask the character's overwhelming sadness, marks a moment of great significance in the novel. Milly's self-revelation is not limited to the facial similarity between the dead woman and herself but also implies their existential resemblance. Milly's identification with the Florentine lady means her understanding and accepting her fate, that she will soon die, as her final words suggest when she 'with her eyes again on her painted sister's—almost as if under their suggestion' (148) says: 'I think I could die without its being noticed' (149). Thus the painting is not simply a visual detail, an attractive element in the background scenery but plays a very important role in the plot and also in characterisation. Besides symbolising Milly's doom and reinforcing the theme of there being a contrast between the visible reality and the underlying truth, the Bronzino portrait also serves as an organic link between past and present, the existence of which Henry James considered essential in a work of art.

Let us turn now to the second type of ekphrastic scenes when James uses a painting as a starting-point to create a scene in the living present. The number of cases when a work of art is indirectly present is infinite from vague hints at pictures that the heroes happen to recall under the influence of an experience, to scenes which may remind the reader of well-known paintings. To illustrate the latter, let me mention he famous party in *The Ambassadors* given by Gloriani, the sculptor, the whirl of which with artists and '*gros bonnets* of many kinds' (*The Ambassadors* 201) and, of course, the right femmes du monde enjoying the pleasant evening in the beautiful garden in the heart of the Faubourg Saint-Germain bears a striking resemblance to Manet's *Music in the Tuileries*, the cavalcade of which shows the same presentation of elegance and status. Or, I can underline the noticeable similarity between the frontispiece to the first volume of *The*

Ambassadors in the New York Edition, Alvin Langdon Coburn's photograph taken on the basis of detailed instructions from Henry James, and Pissarro's painting of the Pont Royal. Structurally they are the same with the focus on the bridge in both and only the other bank being visible; besides, both the painting and the photo show a boat passing under one of the arches of the bridge and a houseboat. In other words, overall impression and separate details alike seem to be very similar if not completely identical, which is all the more obvious if we add that Lambert Strether's images of Parisian streets during the hero's innumerable walks and especially when he is watching Paris from a balcony strongly remind us of Pissarro's Parisian series.

Perhaps the best-known example of a painting that, though not present, plays a central role can also be found in *The Ambassadors*. It is the small landscape painted by Emile-Charles Lambinet, which enchanted Strether a long time ago at a Boston dealer's, and which he wants to find in the French countryside during his one-day trip. Charles Anderson describes Strether's endeavour as a reverse mirror technique, since in this case it is nature that is expected to reflect art; to which I might add that it is a very strange 'mirror'—whatever it shows, the reflection cannot be true to the 'model'. For one of the characteristic features of the Barbizon School, to which Lambinet belonged, was a form of generalisation, which means that the artists painted their landscapes in the studio on the basis of sketches made on the spot, consequently, the final painting did not represent a particular place, rather showed its idealised version. In 1872 James saw an exhibition of privately owned paintings by Rousseau, Dupre, Diaz de la Pena, Troyon and Daubigny in the rooms of Messrs. Doll and Richards at 145 Tremont Street, and the enthusiastic review he wrote about 'the admirable aesthetic gifts of the French mind' (*The Painter's Eye* 43) shows that he regarded the Barbizon landscapists as the masters of modern painting. To illustrate his hero's state of mind and fuse art and reality in rural France, James could have chosen any other picture from the Barbizon landscapes on display in Boston, e.g. a Troyon with a cluster of magnificent oaks, 'with their sturdy foliage just beginning to rust and drop, leaf by leaf, into the rank river-glass, streaked with lingering flowers, at their feet' (*The Painter's Eye* 43), or a Rousseau with 'an admirable expression of size and space, of

condensed light and fresh air' (*The Painter's Eye* 45). His choice of a Lambinet may be explained by the fact that a typical Lambinet includes all or most of the recurring motifs of the Barbizon School, as we can see in *The Washerwomen* or in *Fishing on the Banks of the Seine* (it might be either of them that Strether recalls): a slow moving river reflecting the luminous sky, a cluster of trees with light filtering through and spacious meadows merging with the horizon, creating the impression of peace and quiet, freedom from pressures and complications. Let us see now James's verbal painting in *The Ambassadors*:

> The oblong gilt frame disposed its enclosing lines; the poplars and willows, the reeds and river—a river of which he did n't know, and did n't want to know, the name—fell into a composition, full of felicity, within them; the sky was silver and turquoise and varnish; the village on the left was white and the church on the right was grey; it was all there, in short—it was what he wanted: it was Tremont Street, it was France, it was Lambinet. Moreover he was freely walking about in it. (453)

It is difficult to decide whether Henry James is describing the original Lambinet landscape that he must have seen in Boston, or verbally creating a similar pictorial work of art, modelled on a natural scene that he himself may have seen. Whichever option we choose, it is clear that Lambert Strether's ekphrastic perception achieves the kind of synthesis that was one of the aims of aestheticism: 'to bring the perfect moment into a world of temporality,' as Jonathan Freedman expresses it in his *Professions of Taste* (Freedman 19), i.e. to reach the perfection of perception within the perpetual flux of time. Enjoying the rural idyll, Strether abandons himself to the picturesque details around and he indulges in colours and lights to such an extent that he still feels within the oblong gilt frame of the Lambinet when at the end of his rambling he enters the small village inn on the bank of the river. But at this point the scene ceases to be a Lambinet. (In view of James's immense knowledge of art and his familiarity with paintings, it would not make much sense to claim his ignorance about the shift from a landsacpe in the Barbizon manner to an impressionist scene. Judged by his essay of 1876, 'The Impressionists', his first reaction was unconcealed dislike to 'the little group of the Irreconcilables' (*The Painter's Eye* 114) who, in his opinion, were

'partisans of unadorned reality and absolute foes to arrangement, embellishment, selection' (*The Painter's Eye* 114), for, as he continues, 'they send detail to the dogs and concentrate themselves on general expression' (*The Painter's Eye* 115). Yet, by the time he was writing *The Ambassadors* (1903), he had learned to appreciate them and incorporated their technique in his works, especially in *The Ambassadors*, which is extremely rich in impressionist elements.) With Strether's arrival at the Cheval Blanc, the village inn, we have left the Lambinet behind and entered Impressionism, which can be seen in several points. Firstly, the *setting*, i.e. an inn by a river with a small pavilion at the end of the garden 'with a couple of benches and a table, a protecting rail and a projecting roof' (*The Ambassadors* 459), almost overhanging the grey-blue stream, is typical of the Impressionists. Secondly, the *subject* of a crowd in a cafe, in a public garden or in an open-air dance place was frequently represented in impressionist paintings; I have already mentioned Manet's *Music in the Tuileries*, to which let me add now Renoir's *Moulin de la Galette;* also, a boating party on the river was a similarly favourite subject with the Impressionists, as we can see in Manet's *Argenteuil, the boatmen* or *In a boat* and in *Rowers at Chatou* by Renoir. Finally, as regards the *figures* appearing in the painting, as opposed to the peasant characters busily doing their daily work who may come to be represented in a Barbizon landscape, the pictures by Manet and Renoir and other Impressionists show city dwellers (it is enough to have a look at their clothes) who, for a change, have left their usual urban existence to enjoy the simple pleasures of an excursion.

It is Renoir's *Rowers at Chatou* that seems to be the closest to the given scene in *The Ambassadors*, when Strether sitting in the pavilion catches sight of a boat advancing round the bend:

> They came slowly, floating down, evidently directed to the landing-place near their spectator and presenting themselves to him not less clearly as the two persons for whom his hostess was already preparing a meal. For two very happy persons he found himself straightway taking them—a young man in shirt-sleeves, a young woman easy and fair, who had pulled pleasantly up from some other place [...]. The air quite thickened, at their approach, with further intimations; the intimation that they were expert, familiar, frequent [...]. They knew how to do it, he vaguely felt—and it made them but the more idyllic [...]. (461)

We can find a strong similarity between the scene and Renoir's painting, both in the general impression created in the spectator and in the details, be it the setting, the figures, or the ripple of the surface of the water, 'the rustle of the reeds on the opposite bank, the faint diffused coolness and the slight rock of a couple of small boats' (459). However, the idyll of the scene is broken when Strether realises that the man and the woman, who appear to be so familiar with everything, are Chad and Mme de Vionnet, and the deceitfully enchanting view in front of his eyes is in fact nothing but one of a thousand petty love-affairs, 'the typical tale of Paris' (472). Thus the shift from a Lambinet landscape to an impressionist scene of high life illustrates the thematic development of the episode from Strether's carefree identification of the Lambinet with the rural scenery enveloping him, to his coming face to face with and realising the implications of the sobering reality, in other words from past innocence to present experience.

I would like to round off my presentation on paintings in James's works with an example of ekphrasis when the writer paints his own picture without directly or indirectly taking his inspiration from an existing pictorial work of art. We could mention dozens of scenes taking place in streets and city parks or in private homes which James introduces through carefully selected subtle details which result in a strong visual effect, creating the impression that the reader is actually watching a painter who is adding hue to hue until the full picture has unfolded in front of his eyes. Again, it was rather difficult to select the very episode with which I can illustrate what I wish to say, for there are so many relevant scenes. The one I have finally chosen is a country scene in *The Golden Bowl* which is part of the heroes' second stay in the rich house at Fawns. The house and the immense park themselves would be worth talking about as they are being introduced step by step, but considering the time limit I am going to analyse an episode which appears as an entity and which shows James's technique of framing a live scene to combine life and art.

The first colours and shapes are drawn already inside the smoking-room where the Princess, i.e. Maggie Verver, is watching her father, her husband (the Prince), Charlotte (her father's wife and also her husband's lover) and Fanny, an old friend, playing bridge:

> [...] the facts of the situation were upright for her round the green cloth and the silver flambeaux; the fact of her father's wife's lover facing his mistress; the fact of her father sitting, all unsounded and unblinking, between them; the fact of Charlotte keeping it up, keeping up verything, across the table, with her husband beside her; the fact of Fanny Assingham, wonderful creature, placed opposite to the three and knowing more about each, probably, [...] than either of them knew of either. Erect above all for her was the sharp-edged fact of the relation of the whole group, individually and collectively, to herself [...]. (*The Golden Bowl* 382–383)

The passage shows the same combination of artistic detail and hidden tension that we found in the Bronzino. The 'high decorum' (383) of the room and the characters' elegance cannot mask the underlying truth of cheating, lies and adultery. The effect of the mute scene becomes even stronger when Maggie goes out to the terrace, and like the painter who takes a step back to have a better view of the developing picture, she is watching the players from a little distance:

> Several of the long windows of the occupied rooms stood open to it, and the light came out in vague shafts and fell upon the old smooth stones. The hour was moonless and starless and the air heavy and still [...].
>
> [...] her companions, watched by her through one of the windows [...] charming as they showed in the beautiful room [...] might have been figures rehearsing some play of which she herself was the author [...]. (384-385)

Framed by the French window, the scene in front of Maggie's eyes is like a picture the beautiful impression of which hides hideousness and falsity—as if we were looking at a painting that appears magnificent at first sight but a closer look reveals a number of ugly details. As usual, Henry James is communicating his message through a central consciousness, this time through Maggie's perception, which being a sensitive mind works as that of a painter, identifying the separate elements but at the same time being aware of what is behind them. In my opinion, the given ekphrastic scene which presents a living picture is a splendid example of James's pictorial talent that can create wonderful paitings even without a brush and a canvas. Although he works with words, the resulting work of art has a visual effect (as well), which, in his view, is more than natural, for, as he

wrote in the *Autobiography:* 'the arts were after all essentially one' (*Autobiography* 294). That not everybody manages to achieve it is another matter.

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RÉKA CRISTIAN

EDWARD ALBEE'S CASTINGS

A delicate balance is a shading between love and hate that exists between anybody who cares for one another. (Edward Albee)

Edward Albee's plays—together with a long list of modern American dramatists—are indebted to the works of Eugene O'Neill. The birth of American tragedy starts with O'Neill's dramatic art, which conveys human alienation in the context of modern society, and sheds light on the tension that appears between human essence and existence in the context of modern America. The American tragedy, in Péter Egri's words was "brought about by the increased tension between the face and the reverse of the American Dream"[1]. Post-war American drama depicts many facets of O'Neill's trope of alienation. Among the best to describe the consumerist American Dream within the context of American drama was Edward Albee. His plays are, according to Péter Egri "grotesquely grim and bitterly playful pieces crossbreeding Realistic relevance with Absurdist insight"[2].

Edward Albee's *dramatis personae* entails a construction specific to the name of the playwright. Albee's dramas have a careful composition and a special rendering of characters. Most of his characters are dual, in the sense that it is the couple, which is the basic unit in the playwright's dramatic universe. The characters seem to act in couples, which consist of individuals that supplement each other in

[1] Péter Egri "Critical Approaches to the Birth of Modern American Tragedy. The Significance of Eugene O'Neill". In *The Birth of American Tragedy* (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1988), 34.
[2] Ibid., 34.

telling, in dramatic action or in both. This supplementation, which is implied in the relational rhetoric of Albee's dramaturgy, denotes that there is no specific hierarchy among the dramatic participants. The examples below aim to follow the similitude among Albee's characters. The cast of Albee's dramas participates in the process of encoding and unveiling the dramatic blindspot in Albee's dramas, which is the figure of the present (or absent) child. This trope of the child is revealed in the emblematic dual constructions of the dramatic cast in Albee's dramas. Albee's characters contain, besides the dual component, a dispersed sense of the author in the characters' journey through the oeuvre. The name of Edward Albee imprints the plays with characters that remind the reader of the biographical implications of the plays. The playwright claims this personal implication as a catharctic process: "I get *all* the characters in *all* of my plays out of my system by writing about them"[3]. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Sandbox, Three Tall Women, The Zoo Story, A Delicate Balance, The American Dream, Marriage Play, Counting the Ways, Finding the Sun* are some of Albee's plays centered around the issue of the love and hate that sublimate into dramatic filiation acts. In the following the discussion will be based on mostly on *The Zoo Story, A Delicate Balance, The American Dream, Marriage Play, Counting the Ways, Finding the Sun*, with references to *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *The Play About the Baby,* and some remarks about *Three Tall Women* and *Sandbox*[4].

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[3] Mel Gussow Edward Albee: A Singular Journey. A Biography (London: Oberon, 1999), 354.

[4] There are two Albee plays that are the closest to his biography. One is *The Sandbox*, a "cameo tribute to his maternal grandmother, who was closest to him" and *Three Tall Women*, "an act of peacemaking" with his adoptive mother, Frances (Frankie) Albee. The scene of the second act in *Three Tall Women* that always moves the playwright is when "the son, Albee's surrogate, comes onstage and sits by the bedside of his mother". *Three Tall Women* is the drama of Albees' replicas. The character **A** (and her unnamed husband, who likes only tall women) explicitly stands for Frances (Frankie) $\mathbf{A}_{\text{lbee}}$, while the son of **A** bears not only the trademark of the playwright but highly identifies with him. There is a special monologue in the play, which is uttered by another character, **B**, who is in fact a younger version of the character **A**. The character of **B** recalls an episode of lovemaking, which she had with a groom in a stable stall, an affair that her son (the Young Man) discovered. The indirect, metonymical reference to **A**/Frankie is

The child (son) is the major theme that the playwright presents in his dramas. Albee's 1997 drama culminates in this regard and it is entitled *he Play About the Baby*[5]. In the same context of filiation the

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made clear, since Frankie was a horsewoman and Albee said that this scene was his literary wish fulfillment The silent Young Man of the play is described by the character **C**. She is the contemplative character of the drama and the younger version of the characters of **B** and **A**,. In act two C describes the Young Man as "how nice, how handsome, how very...". The sentence is not finished, nor the description finalized and the image of the Young Man ends in silence. **A** (and **B**) cannot forgive the Young Man. They are hostile towards him because of his homosexuality, a way of loving which they could never accept, and, accordingly tabooed the subject. A proof of the banished topic of homosexuality is the repressed figure of the Young Man, who is a self-portrait of Albee in the play. He does not talk, in fact he does not utter a sound. His presence is only physical not verbal. The figure of the Young Man appears also in *The American Dream* and in *The Sandbox*, as Teddy in *A Delicate Balance*, as Fergus in *Finding the Sun*, as YAM *in FAM and YAM*. In *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, he is the enigmatic character, the fictional son of Martha and George. These love-hate games are encoded mostly by the relationship of the playwright with his mother and the maternal grandmother. The figure of Frances (Frankie) Albee is one that practically haunts all Albee's plots. Present as the character of Frankie **A**lbee in *Three Tall Women*, she is Mommy in *The Sandbox* and in *The American Dream*, Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and Agnes in *A Delicate Balance*, the Wife in *All Over*, She in *Counting the Ways*, and Edmee in *Finding the Sun*. The most sympathetic character, however remains that of Grandma, which appears in *The American Dream* and *Sandbox*. *The Sandbox* is Albee's other memory play. It was written for and about Edward Albee's maternal Grandma Cotter, "his closest relative" with whom he formed a lasting and profound attachment. "A crotchety and very amusing woman", she made Edward 's life easier and brighter by being as Mel Gussow describes her in the YAM chapter of the playwright's biography, "a natural ally against his mother". The estranged parents did not tell Edward Albee of her death in 1959 so he missed her funeral. Later he metonymically transposed his personal good-bye into a "brief play, in memory of my grandmother". William Flanagan Edward Albee's mentor and companion provided the play's music for this very personal farewell. The Young Man ("good-looking, well built") is converted into the real son-like Angel of Death that gives Grandma the final tender touch: "The Young Man bends over, kisses Grandma gently on her forehead." Edward Albee *The Sandbox. The Death of Bessie Smith (with FAM and YAM)* (New York: Signet, 1960), 20.

[5] Albee's play entitled *The Play About the Baby* (1998) starts with a baby's first cry in the wold. A young couple wants to take away the baby but the Man and the Woman (as the biological parents) try to convince the young couple that the baby never existed. Finally the blanketed "baby bundle" was thrown into the air. "The

play entitled *Fam and Yam* explicitly presents the not-yet named (name of the) author in the young character of YAM (the acronym for The Young American Playwright), which renders a filial relationship with the character of FAM (Famous American Playwright)[6]. The motif of the child (who is mostly gendered male) is recurring in different versions throughout the dramaturgy of Albee. The child constitutes the blindspot of the plays and it is hidden and revealed in the world of Albee's verbal mastery.

While the dual relationships in the dramas of Williams require a strong sense of the character's gendered nature, the characters from *Seascape* and *Sandbox*, the family of *The American Dream*, or *Fam and Yam*, and *Fragments. A Sit Around*—to name a few of Edward Albee's *dramatis personae*—seem to distance their corporeality from their gendered bodies. In the context of Albee's dramaturgy, sexuality seems of no greater importance than a simple dramatic device. Forster Hirsch remarks that Albee's characters are "often removed from sex" and that "bodies in Albee are never, as they are in the work of Tennessee Williams, instruments not only of lust but of salvation and spiritual transcendence as well".[7] Since the couple is the basic unit of Albee's dramaturgy, it is the trope of the couples that will be in the focus of further investigations. The scope of this investigation is to visualize, through the couples in the dramas, the issue of the present or absent child as Albee's plot of desire. The aim is also to present a patterning of events and characters by deriving the invisible into the visible. The invisible blindspot of the child in one play may as well be a trope of representation in another play or, in other words, one play may actually be the other discourse of the other play. An example of this kind is the (mis)communication of George and Nick on behalf of the child Nick mentions and George hides (or Tobias and Harry in *A*

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story is directly from Albee's life" and the theme of the baby and self-determination of what reality is has been of primary concern to Albee. Cf. Mel Gussow *Edward Albee: A Singular Journey. A Biography* (London: Oberon, 1999), 396–399.

[6] FAM and YAM. An Imaginary Interview. In Edward Albee The Sandbox. The Death of Bessie Smith (with FAM and YAM), (New York: New American Library, 1960).

[7] Foster Hirsch "Delicate Balances". In *Who's Afraid of Edward Albee?* (Berkeley: Creative Arts Books, 1978), 15.

Delicate Balance with their cheating in marriage after the death of Tobias's son, Teddy). Their encounter in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* is less visible, but, in essence, it corresponds in its form to the explicit one of Jerry's and Peter's communication in *The Zoo Story* (the lack of Peter's male child). The motor or the (sub)plot of the drama, the child as the blindspot, reads its equivalent from an Albee drama into the other one by the same playwright.

The embodiment of Albee's characters starts with the process of their naming. Albee's characters gain corporeality and dramatic texture through the names they bear. The boundaries of the sayable, as Ludwig Wittgenstein points out in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* are achieved by drawing a limit to the expression of thoughts, since if something is not delimited (*id est* is not named), it does not exist[8]. The names are pictures of the person/character and "what the picture represents is its sense"[9]. They depict the state of things and tell about the properties of the body included in the name or in Wittgenstein's words "the proposition *shows* how things stand, *if* it is true, and it *says,* that they do so stand"[10]. Names, therefore are condensed thoughts and essences of the bearers, that is, "everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly"[11].

The generalizing names (Mommy, Daddy, Grandma, He, She, The Nurse, The Doctor, A, B, C, The Young Man, The Musician) in the cast of Albee's plays denote the function and relations that are established among the characters. They stand for descriptions for a given type of characters, of a class, or system of particulars. Other names Albee employs in his dramas (such as Martha, George, Nick, Honey, Tobias, Claire, Julia, Jerry, Peter) refer to a specific person. The explicit names (full names) are, with rare exception, eliminated in some of Albee's dramas from the language and, therefore what remains is in many dramas the substitution of the person with its

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[8] "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent". Ludwig Wittgenstein *Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus* (with an introduction by Bertrand Russel), (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981[1922]), § 7.

[9] Ibid., § 2.221.

[10] Ibid,. § 4.022.

[11] The statement is followed by "everything that can be said can be said clearly". Ibid., § 4. 116.

relational function. The tropes used for naming can substitute for different roles, and, as such, they play the role of the name. Some examples of this category are the following: Grandma, Mommy, Daddy in *The American Dream* (1961) and *Sandbox* (1960), FAM, YAM in *Fam and Yam* (1960), The Father, The Nurse, The Intern, The Orderly in *The Death of Bessie Smith* (1960), The Young Man, The Musician in *Sandbox*, Woman 1, 2, 3, 4 and Man 1, 2, 3, 4 in *Fragments. A Sit Around* (1993), the Long-Winded Lady, the Old Woman and the Minister in *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* (1968), the Voice in *Box* (the 1968 "parenthesis" play for *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*), the Cardinal, the Lawyer and the Butler in *Tiny Alice* (1964), He and She in *Counting the Ways* (1976), The Woman, The Girl, and The Man in *Listening* (1976), The Wife, The /dying/ Husband, The Mistress, The Son, The Daughter, The Best Friend, The Doctor, in *All Over* (1971) and finally the most simplified version of names as A, B, C in *Three Tall Women* (1991). These names are functional and depict the human relations that are established among them. The names as character forms depict the Albee character as a relational unit (the couple) that hides the blindspot within the onomasticon.

Another category of names employed in Edward Albee's dramas is the first name. In contrast to the previous use of indefinite names, the first names designate a definite set of objects/persons. The family name in the Albee oeuvre is excluded. Examples of character names in this sense are: Julian and Miss Alice in *Tiny Alice*[12] (the characters were created as "creating God in one's own image" as confessed by the playwright in Mel Gussow's biography), Lucinda, Edgar, Carol, Oscar, Elizabeth, Jo, Fred, and Sam in *The Lady from Dubuque* (1980), Nancy, Charlie, Sarah, and Leslie in *Seascape*[13] (1975), Abigail, Benjamin, Cordelia, Daniel, Edmee, Fergus, Gertrude and Henden in *Finding the Sun* (1983), Peter and Jerry in *The Zoo Story*

[12] "Tennessee Williams said that Tiny Alice was the Establishment, 'the meaningless, monstrous, outrageously mysterious Mystery that defeats us all' ". In Mel Gussow *Edward Albee: A Singular Journey. A Biography* (London: Oberon, 1999), 221.

[13] Originally the title of *Seascape* was *Life* and *Death*. Initially *Life* and *Death* were two short plays, conceived as companion pieces. Ibid., 282.

(1959), Martha, George, Honey and Nick in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962), Agnes, Tobias, Claire, Julia, Edna and Harry in *A Delicate Balance* (1966), Jack and Gillian in *Marriage Play* (1987).

Some character names are fully given and these are inserted into the title of the plays. One of them is as the real person, the African–American singer Bessie Smith, the absent eponymous character in *The Death of Bessie Smith*[14]. The other full name (also a cultural code) is that of the Chairman Mao Tse-Tung from the *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*. Here, we have not only the full name but also the function of another eponymous character, which in the given context of the Cold War bears a strong political connotation. A solitary example in Albee's oeuvre is that of Mrs. *Bark*er from *The American Dream*. She is the opposite figure of Willy Loman from Arthur Miller's *The Death of a Salesman*, a success-oriented, opportunistic icy woman of the market economy who sells the dream of the perfect child to a childless family and has a ponderous voice that makes up her name. With the exception of these above-mentioned three exceptions, the reader is channeled in the dramas of Albee from the symbolic reading of the full names towards a semiotic reading of the generalized or first names of characters. The lack of family names tends to emphasize the universal nature of the bonds between humans with their visible and less visible sides.

The personal frame is contextualized as a perfect form that occasionally harbors an empty spirit, as Foster Hirsch remarked: "Albee's response to the characters is ambivalent, recalling Tennessee Williams' divided attitude to *his* Adonis figures: The perfect form of the American Dream cloacks an empty spirit."[15] The typology of the Albee dramatic character is subject to the pattern of dual relations. Martha and George, Honey and Nick, Mommy and Daddy, Jerry and Peter, Agnes and Tobias, Edna and Harry, Edmee and Fergus, Benjamin and Daniel, He and She, are all characters that play the

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[14] "The germ idea occurred to Albee when he was reading a record sleeve note about Bessie Smith, the colored singer whose life might have been saved if she had been admitted quickly enough to hospital after a car crash, but the nearest hospital took white patients only". In Ronald Hayman *Edward Albee* (London: Heinemann, 1971), 13.

[15] Foster Hirsch "Delicate Balances". In *Who's Afraid of Edward Albee?* (Berkeley: Creative Arts Book, 1978), 15.

supplementing game. They are all centripetal characters directed towards a lost primordial unity[16]. The dramas of Albee seek to reveal and subvert in a powerful battle of words all maladjustment that destroy the harmony between and among the members of the family (as a basic social unit) and outside it. "The image of the family as a cauldron of seething Freudian maladjustment haunts Albee in all of his work; in different moods and styles, he returns, obsessively, to these destroyed and destroying figures."[17] observed Foster Hirsch.

In the act of repeating the description of the destroyed and destroying figures (as part of the family rituals), the dramatic plots of Albee's plays are mostly loose frameworks against which the playwright sets "his characters snapping at each other"[18]. This "snapping" is here a form of communication, of communion between and among the characters. The "snapping" as a form of communication induces a dualism, which depicts the Albee vision of fundamental human attitudes: love and hate. These attitudes will finally form a unit in establishing the meaning of the telling in Albee's plays, which (as confessed in the Mel Gussow book by the playwright himself) are the reinterpretation and the reevaluation of the mystery of his birth and the sense of (his afterwards) abandonment. If the playwright's (personal) journey in life is a singular one, as Mel Gussow defines it, the journey of his mimetic characters tend to attain a sense of plenitude, a desire for the primordial, semiotic phase in a dual construct. They live in interdependence. All follow the urge to

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[16] The most perfect form is the primordial semiotic communication/communion with the mother, which stands at the base of all later human communications and relational abilities. The angular desire engulfed by the corpus of the infant and the body of the mother becomes a semiotic realm of the unsaid, which later develops into forms of telling. The object-relation theory seems to explain the process. The infant develops a primary identification with the first object of love, with the mother, after the period of un-differentiation before birth. The process of differentiation shifts from the feeling of the total symbiosis, as depicted by Margaret Mahler, in the fusion of the mother-child diad, to separation, as the traumatic process, to individuation (through primary and secondary identification processes, the Oedipal stage and the Lacanian mirror stage), and finally, to the stage of the autonomous the subject.

[17] Foster Hirsch "The Living Room Wars". In *Who's Afraid of Edward Albee?* (Berkeley: Creative Arts Book, 1978), 21.

[18] Ibid., 24.

attain again the primary, lost object of *love* in an abyss that appears between (and among) them and which, as Gerald Weales had remarked, has been carefully induced by the laws of society similarly perceived by Albee and Williams (and Ionesco).

> The chasm that confronts the Albee characters may, then, be existential chaos or a materialistic society corrupt enough to make a culture hero out of... (whom? to each critic his own horrible example, and there are those who would pick Albee himself), or a combination in which the second of these is an image of the first. There is nothing unusual about this slightly unstable mixture of philosophic assumption and social criticism; it can be found in the work of Tennessee Williams and, from quite a different perspective, that of Eugéne Ionesco[19].

The similitude of Albee's and Williams's plays is pointed out by Harold Bloom, who emphasized the role of *love* in both playwrights' dramaturgy. The shift of the two basic human attitudes for both playwrights is made evident: their characters love and hate at the same time; they envy and gratify instantly. Williams has some metaphysical input in the quest for the object of love while Albee, in Harold Bloom's view, evades this transcendental component by making it ironic:

> ...we have a drama of impaling, of love gone rancid because of a metaphysical lack. That is Albee's characteristic and obsessive concern, marked always by its heritage, which is a similar sense of the irreconciliability of love and the means of love that dominates the plays of Tennessee Williams.[20]

Albee's female characters bear, in most cases, masculine features and appear to be with phallic attributes. Mothering, as the relational human process in Albee's plays, does not necessarily imply the presence of the explicit female body, therefore Albee's women characters are detached from the stereotypical feature of the woman and embody irony and satire in their dramatic emasculation. However, as Foster Hirsch observed, they are rather maternal figures with occasional emasculating or phallic attributes.

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[19] Gerald Weales "Edward Albee: Don't Make Waves". In Harold Bloom *Edward Albee* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), 35.

[20] Harold Bloom *Edward Albee* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), 6.

> The women Albee reserves his sharpest satiric jobs are the ones who unravel, like the Nurse and Mommy, the hysterics who want everyone to collapse along with them. Women rule the roost in Albee's households; sometimes they govern wisely if icily, sometimes their power is clearly threatening and emasculating. It is significant, though, that women are typically presented as maternal rather than romantic figures[21].

As in virtually each of Albee's works, "sex is handled evasively, kept at distance from the play's ostensible focus of dramatic interest"[22]. What is important is not the real or perceived gender of the characters, it is rather the relational image they project through the texts they tell or act. Albee's dramatic text is a palimpsest consisting of the readings of all the characters involved (as many subplots as many characters). What they read is their own selves projected into the other, or at least, the desire to see themselves in the other.

Albee is "a modern spirit building from the inside out"[23] and has an implied artistic danger that Eugene O'Neill described as 'beyond theater'. His Pirandellian *maschere nude*, the stripped semblance of what is commonly called "character", relies on the power of recognizing a Wittgenstein-type difficulty in human communication. This difficulty becomes materialized in Albee's "almost perverse refusal to trim it down to direct and acceptable statement"[24]. Eloquent examples in this manner are the marking figures of Grandma from the *American Dream* and *Sandbox*, of Claire from *A Delicate Balance*, Jerry from *The Zoo Story* or the famous Martha-George couple from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. These are some of the wise Shakespearean Prosperos clothed in burlesque modernist dramatic situations and talks. Humor, in Albee's dramas, becomes a trap for the reader; in his dramas "to laugh at any of these things is to laugh at our

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[21] Foster Hirsch "Evasions of Sex: The Closet Dramas". In *Who's Afraid of Edward Albee?* (Berkeley: Creative Arts Book, 1978), 106.

[22] Ibid., 112.

[23] Anne Paolucci "The Discipline of Arrogance". In *From Tension to Tonic. The Plays of Edward Albee* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 5.

[24] Anne Paolucci "The Existential Burden. The Death of Bessie Smith, The Sandbox, The American Dream, The Zoo Story". In From Tension to Tonic. The Plays of Edward Albee (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 18.

own expense"[25]. Decoding Albee('s characters) is more than a process of a simple recognition—as the comic laughter—, it also brings forth all that recognition entails. This also includes the fact that Edward Albee does not write about what things are, he rather points at what they are not (let to be), especially in traditional social contexts and well bound human attachments (such as the institution of marriage). Anne Paolucci compared Albee with Bernard Shaw, who shocked his readers by "insisting that love and marriage do not mix easily in marriage". Albee in his turn, as Paolucci writes, insisted "on what sex in marriage is *not*"[26]. By writing about things, which "are not" or 'do not speak their name', the characters and the plot of Albee's dramas bear the mark of the unsaid, of the blindspot, of the enigma that direct the reader towards the name of the playwright. In the following we will follow the characters and the quest for the enigmatic figure of the child in some of Albee's dramas.

The Zoo Story is a masterly play[27] that emerges from a casual encounter between two men, Jerry and Peter, into an explosive confrontation that ends in a ritualistic act of sacrifice and violence. By dying, Jerry offers Peter a special awareness of life, which suddenly wakes Peter up in a final recognition. The anguish and loneliness of the two different men are common denominators and concern, as Anita Maria Stenz writes in her book about Albee, "the inadequacy of the human heart"[28]. Peter and Jerry are neither winners nor losers,

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[25] Ibid., 35.

[26] Anne Paolucci "Exorcisms. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*". In *From Tension to Tonic. The Plays of Edward Albee* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 47.

[27] The *Zoo Story* is Albee's first play and came out of Albee's experiences in New York in the 1950s as a Western Union messenger. The play was influenced by the figures of Jean Genet and Tennesee Williams. Cf. "Die Zoo-Geschichte". In Mel Gussow *Edward Albee. A Singular Journey. A Biography* (London: Oberon, 1999), 93–118. "Albee himself has pointed out the influence upon *The Zoo Story* of *Suddenly Last Summer* by Tennessee Williams. Albee's play, like that of Williams, contains a search for God climaxed by violence. Like the Old Testament Jeremiah, whose cruel prophecies were a warning kindness to his people, Jerry may have educated Peter in his relation to God". In Ruby Cohn *Edward Albee* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1969), 9.

[28] Anita Maria Stenz *Edward Albee: The Poet of Loss* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1978), 12.

they are alienated figures that seek understanding. Jerry exemplifies the character, which in human relations best exemplifies the love-hate rhetoric and pushes these to the borders of the drives and instincts. As the title shows, the *zoo*—with its animals in cages—depicts the instincts that are repressed in humans by the restrictive laws of society. A similar situation is depicted by Eugene O'Neill in *The Hairy Ape* where the protagonist of the play, Yank, is an analogous character with that of Jerry from *The Zoo Story*. The real interlocutor of the play that permits access to the other person, to the repressed Other within, is Jerry, the protagonist of the drama, who represents the world of instincts described by the symbol of the dog[29]. The allegorical encounter of Jerry and the dog ("an anatomy of love" as Ruby Cohn described it) is the one that best describes Jerry's personality in "The Story of Jerry and the Dog". Jerry here describes his view on the basic human attitudes, stressing that kindness (love) and cruelty (hate) are counterparts and the two combined have effect only:

> **Jerry**: I have learned that neither kindness nor cruelty by themselves independent of each other, created any effect beyond themselves; and I have learned that the two combined, together, at the same time, are the teaching emotion. And what is gained is loss... a compromise. We neither love nor hurt, because we do not try to reach each other... If we can so misunderstand, well, then, what have we invested the word love in the first place?[30]

Peter is described in the presentation of the cast. He is Jerry's counterpart in the process of "teaching emotion". If Jerry represents the world of instincts, Peter is the man of the laws, of the rules, a person that society has perfectly 'domesticated'. His clothing embodies his social position of middle-class person ("tweeds") and suggests even his profession ("horn-rimmed glasses"). Although a middle-aged person, his looks suggest a man younger. This means that

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[29] The 'dog' can also be interpreted as the inversely read 'god' (anagram of 'dog'). The symbolism of the dog is related with death. He is the companion of the dead on their 'Night-Sea Crossing' as the dog is the first sign of Jerry's journey in the underworld.. Cf. J. E. Cirlot *A Dictionary of Symbols* (trans. Jack Sage), (New York: Philosophical Library, 1983), 84.

[30] Edward Albee *The Zoo Story*. In *Absurd Drama* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 176.

he is capable of doing more than he shows or wants to show. It may well be that Jerry was attracted to this unrecognized potential in Peter, who, in an unusual manner suggests his misplacement on a Sunday afternoon in New York's Central Park, alone. He is a man in his "early forties, neither fat nor gaunt, neither handsome nor homely". He wears "tweeds, smokes a pipe, carries horn-rimmed glasses" and while he is "moving into middle age, his dress and his manner would suggest a man younger".[31] Peter works as an executive in a small publishing house. He has a wife, two daughters, two parakeets and cats, and lives between *Lex*ington and *Third* Avenue. The place of his home denotes his way of life: *Lex*ington symbolizes the rules of the society ('lex' in Latin meaning 'law') and Peter's conformist nature, while the *Third* Avenue implies the symbolic number *three*, which, according to J.E. Cirlot denotes the solution of the conflict posed by dualism. Peter's conflict will be with Jerry and the end of their dualism will be Jerry's sacrifice.

Jerry is described as a person that was once handsome but lost his beauty. His body that "begun to go fat" implies the lack of sexual activity that seems to have caused him a "great weariness" and aimless wanderings among people that only misunderstand him. He is in search of a person with which he can communicate in a world of miscommunication. He is "a man in his late thirties, not poorly dressed, but carelessly", with "once a trim and lightly muscled body" that "has begun to go fat". He is no longer handsome, but it is evident "that he once was. His fall from physical grace should not suggest debauchery; he has, to come closest to it, a great weariness.[32] Jerry lives in the upper *West* Side between *Columbus* Avenue and Central Park *West*, on the top floor of a four-storey brown-stone rooming-house in the *rear*. The symbolism of *West* in the context of his home implies a place where the sun sets and where symbolic night (as his implied death) begins. Jerry's death represents the impossibility of living in accordance with the values he carries. To make contact he has to "take his life in hands just as *Columbus* did when he set out for

[31] Ibid., 158.
[32] Ibid., 158.

a voyage from which there would have been no return"[33] (*emphasis mine*) if he found what he was searching for. The *rear* position of the apartment emphasizes the repressed nature of his place—as the place of the unconscious—, something that is in the rear is hidden as the past events and traumas from Jerry's life. The twin room of his room (the two smaller rooms were originally one room) is occupied by a "coloured queen who always keeps his door open". The similarity of the rooms connote a narcissistic, dual image, which implies (not only by the nature of the transvestite) Jerry's nature. His possessions are two picture empty frames, "eight or nine books", a pack of pornographic playing cards, an old Western Union typewriter[34] "that prints nothing but capital letters", and a box with some "please letters" and sea-rocks he "picked on the beach" when he was a child. The empty frames depict the lack of parents (two picture frames, one for each dead parent). The "please letters" are only substitutions for possible objects of love and are detours on Jerry's route of desire. The sea-*rock*s, however foretell the person with whom he will finally achieve communion and communication, Peter ('Peter' means 'rock')[35].

The blindspot of the drama is an absent character, the unborn child that Peter longs for. Since he is a conformist, Peter wants to have a son in order to obey the laws of patriarchal culture, where the male child means the continuation of the family, of the name and its traditions. This unborn "male child"—that Peter's wife could not

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[33] Ronald Hayman "The Zoo Story". In *Edward Albee* (London: Heineman, 1971), 11.

[34] The Western Union typewriter is both a personal involvement and a device with which he actually wrote his first drama. "In February, one month before his birthday, he sat down in a folding chair at a rickety table in his kitchen in his apartment at 238 West 4th Street. Using a standard typewriter he had stolen (or 'liberated') from Western Union and yellow copy paper from the same source, he began to write a play, single space, filling the margins. Everything had led him to this moment. For the first time in his life, the writing seemed to flow from some inner need and conviction." It took two and a half weeks to write the drama. "From first line to last, it flowed. As he said, 'There was a click'." In Mel Gussow *Edward Albee. A Singular Journey. A Biography* (London: Oberon, 1999), 91.

[35] The drama can also be interpreted in Biblical terms, with the cast of '*Jerry*', who would stand for *Jesus* and 'Peter', who would be Peter, the apostle.

"provide" her husband with—is the key that ignites the outcome of the drama. Peter blames the lack of male child (besides his two daughters) on the "matter of genetics, not manhood", when Jerry accuses Peter of not being man enough. The untold desire and the lack induced by the impossibility of having a 'heir' drive Peter into the induced fight with Jerry, who recognized this by Peter's body semiotics.

> **Jerry**: And you're not going to have any more kids, are you?
> **Peter** [*a bit distantly*]: No. No more. Why did you say that? How would you know about that?
> **Jerry**: *The way you cross your legs*, perhaps; something in the *voice*. Or maybe I'm just guessing. (*emphasis mine*) [36]

By mentioning the child he could never have, Jerry made Peter step out from his conformist position and obey his instinctual nature. "I guess this is what happened at the zoo", Jerry finally recognizes. With the help of the non-existent child, Jerry has made Peter react instinctually in self-defense, and at the same time he "comforted" Jerry in his last minutes of life. The blindspot of the play, similar to the workings of the *pharmakos* ('medicine', which heals but has side effects which can harm), embodies the basis of the relation in humans: human emotion in which kindness and cruelty work as supplements. The non-existent child does not love nor hurt because it is not reached. As Jerry says "we neither love nor hurt because we do not try to reach each other". Jerry made Peter at least verbally reach, 'mention' this child. This process showed the two facets of the same coin: love and hate, life and death. The exorcism of the desire in Peter by Jerry was similar to the veiling and the unveiling of the fictional son in *Virginia Woolf*, whose "mentioning" caused the flaw of the action in the drama.

A Delicate Balance's cast includes Agnes who is described as "a handsome woman in her late fifties". Tobias is her husband and he is "a few years older" than his wife. The cast encounters the mirroring couple, Edna and Harry, who are 'very much like Agnes and Tobias'. Besides the two couples from the cast, there are two single characters. One is Julia, the daughter of the Agnes-Tobias couple, and the other is Claire, Agnes' alcoholic sister. Claire is "several years younger" than

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[36] Edward Albee *The Zoo Story*. In *Absurd Drama* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 161.

Agnes and she is, as her name implies (Clare meaning 'clear') the *clair*voyant of the play. Her otherwise very positive figure resembles that of Grandma in *The Sandbox* or in *The American Dream.* According to Mel Gussow's biography of Edward Albee, Agnes and Tobias were actually inspired by the playwright's adoptive parents, Frances and Reed Albee. Claire was modeled by the playwright's aunt (Frances's sister) Jane, while Julia resembles Albee's cousin, Barbara, who was another adopted child of the extended Albee family, who was a "spoiled brat"[37].

Julia is the problem character of the play. She is the daughter of Agnes and Tobias, an "angular" character, who failed in all her four marriages (with Tom, Charlie, Phil and Doug). During the plot time of the play, Julia is home after a new deception with Douglas, her fourth husband. Claire utters the truth about the failure of Julia's marriages:

> **Claire**[*a mocking sing-song*]: Philip loved to gamble,
> *Charlie loved the* boys,
> Tom went after women,
> Douglas...[38] (*emphasis mine*)

Julia is in close relation with the blindspot of the play, who is her brother Teddy. He is described in any way but his absence rules the plot because of the impact he had on all the dramatic participants. Teddy died and he has become a fictional, non-existent son to whom all relate to some extent. He is, in functional terms similar to the son in *Virginia Woolf.* The summer when Teddy, Julia's younger brother, died she presented body scars in her mourning, "she used to skin her knees" in grief. It was that summer when Tobias cheated on Agnes by sharing the same woman (most probably Claire) with his best friend, Harry.

When Harry and Edna bring in the house "the scare" and want to finally depart, Tobias repeatedly asks Harry to "please, stay". His attachment to Harry dates from the point of losing Teddy. Julia does not have children of her own. Once every three years she comes home and announces that her marriage failed. Agnes labels her as "our melancholy", which means that Julia is a site of Teddy's remembrance

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[37] Mel Gussow *Edward Albee: A Singular Journey. A Biography* (London: Oberon, 1999), 254–255.

[38] Edward Albee *A Delicate Balance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 31.

since melancholy connotes the absence of the object of love, that Teddy used to be. Julia is the physical attempt to replace her dead brother in the world of the drama. She is thus the visible site for the blindspot of the play. Claire tells Tobias that Julia is "only" his "daughter" and as such, she emphasizes the role the remaining daughter plays in the family since the departure of Teddy. Julia stopped calling her father Daddy or Father from the moment Teddy was gone. This fact emphasizes an infertile parenting, a family devoid of further life, so specific to Albee's dramatic world.

The figure of the absent Teddy is shifted towards the figure of Julia's ex-husband, Charlie, whom Julia's parents "pushed" on their daughter (because of Charlie's similitude with their son, Teddy). Charlie was the most beloved of all of Julia's husbands because he was "so alike" Teddy although he was the husband that had the inclination for boys:

> **Julia**: Do I pick 'em [husbands]? ...
> **Tobias** [*grudging*]: Well, you may have been pushed on Charlie...
> **Julia**: Poor Charlie.
> **Tobias** [*temper rising a little*]: Well, for Christ's sake, if you miss him so much...
> **Julia**: I do not miss him! Well, yes, I do, but not that way. Because he seemed so alike what Teddy would have been.
> **Tobias** [*quiet anger and sorrow*]: Your brother would not have grown up to be a fag.
> **Julia**: Who is to say?[39]

Teddy is the physically absent character, to whom the family directly or indirectly relates. The reason of his death is knot mentioned, but it might have been the "fright", the "plague", the "terror" of his recognition in being *other* ("a fag") than he was (socially) supposed to be. At least this is what the Julia and Tobias dialogue above makes it visible. Claire introduces the deictic figure of Teddy, when the frightened Harry and Edna arrive at the house of Agnes and Tobias. Claire puts sadly the rhetorical sentence: "I was wondering when ***it*** would begin... when it would start." (*emphasis mine*). Nobody seems to recognize the referent of her sentence. This referent is only labeled as the fright, "the terror", the "plague" (which

[39] Ibid., 49.

are "both the same") that the friend-couple brings uninvited in the house and seems to lack its referent. Julia is the one who reacts and even over-reacts to the arrival of the uninvited guests and their unsaid and euphemized 'thing' they cannot name. Julia's hysterical symptoms at the sight of the guests refer back to a metaphoricized 'skinning of her knees' that started to happen when (after Teddy's death) she found out the "cheating" of her father (and his friend). Her nervous reactions link the fright of the guests with the silenced, elegiac atmosphere of the lack of Teddy. The repressed confrontation with the trauma of losing Teddy, the beloved son, is made real with the coming of the guests. As in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*?, all the characters from this play are 'afraid' that the 'delicate balance' of the superficial world will break with mentioning the "plague" that has come upon them.

It is Julia's mediation through which the blindspot, Teddy becomes visualized and 'mentioned'. For a long time after Teddy's death, Julia could not come in terms with herself. The death of the brother marked her and remained a traumatic event that later plotted her life. Her mother recollects Julia's primary hostile attitude to her brother, which then grew into a deep lack and modeled further failures in her life:

> **Agnes**: ... Teddy's birth, and how she felt unwanted, tricked his death, and was she more relieved than lost...? All the schools we sent her to, and did she fail in them through hate... or love? And when we come to marriage, dear: each of them, the fear, the happiness, the sex, the stopping, the infidelities...[40]

Agnes, the mother, is "a perfectionist" and "*very* difficult to live with". About herself she says that she is the "ruler of the roost", licensed wife, midnight... nurse"[41]. She even overrides her chain of definitions in stressing her function as a "wife, a mother, a lover, a homemaker, a nurse, a hostess, an agitator, a pacifier, a truth-teller, a deceiver". She is the phallic woman of the play, the Albee type of strong woman. Tobias has many common features with his friend, Harry. They are, in fact, metonymies of each other (and Claire has been the same mirror for both). The similitude is stressed not only by the fact that they have cheated on their wives in the "same summer

[40] Ibid., 72.
[41] Ibid., 95.

with the same woman" (Claire) but also in Agnes' recognition of the semblance when she asks for a drink from Harry: "Will you make me a drink, Harry, since you are being Tobias?". Tobias is a complex character. He is later (and finally) called by his daughter a "saint, sage, *daddy*, everything... sea monster, ram... absolutely human man"[42]. Tobias is already "stranger" to Agnes, a stranger that happened to enter her room during the night of the plot time. By the end of the play Tobias answers to the question concerning his relation to Harry put by Claire at the beginning ("Would you give friend Harry the shirt off your back, as they say?"). He says that "friendship grows to love" but since Harry does not respond Tobias has his replicas to the silence: "I like you, Harry, yes, I really do, but I don't like Edna... I find my liking you has limits... BUT THOSE ARE MY LIMITS!" The attraction of the two men Tobias and Harry to each other echoes the image of what Teddy might have become if he was alive (like Charlie, who liked men) and identified with his father. Harry's fright, in turn, might have been the recognition of his otherness and attraction towards Tobias, which he, as his wife 'dare not name' but are *afraid of*, as the couple of *Virginia Woolf* is "afraid" on the account of their non-existent son.

Claire is the symbol of the pre-Oedipal stage of the semiotic since she is, according to Agnes, "nothing but vowels". She is an alcoholic that escaped the organized group therapy and makes fun of the experience in the home of her sister. Claire bears the connotation of her name since she was "not named for nothing". She is the female Tiresias floating in alcohol. She "watches from the sidelines" and has seen "so very much, has seen all so clearly" from the life of the family. Her scopic drive is emphasized by the fact that she has never "missed a chance to participate in watching".

Edna and Harry[43] suddenly enter the house of Agnes-Tobias with the explanation similar in function with the nursery rhyme from *Who's Afraid of Virgnia Woolf?* (which in Thornton Wilder's words could be

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[42] Ibid., 48.

[43] "Edward says that the reason he borrowed the Winston's names [Albee's Jewish neighbors] for the characters is that they would have been the last people that his parents would have taken in". Mel Gussow *Edward Albee: A Singular Journey. A Biography* (London: Oberon, 1999), 40.

sung as the rhymes of the 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush'). They exclaim: "WE... GOT FRIGHTENED!... We... got... scared... We... were... terrified... AND THERE WAS NOTHING!"[44]. What seems to be the no-named thing, the "nothing" for Edna and Harry, is the pain of Teddy's lack for Agnes and Tobias. Both couples love and hate at the same time. This culminates in Tobias's soliloquy about the always shifting nature of love: "we love each other, don't we?"; in his statement about liking Harry and disliking Edna at the same time, or in Harry's questioning the friendship of Tobias: "Do they love us?" The answer is always an ambiguous one since love entails hate and hate entails love.

The love-hate relationship is visible even from the horizon of the context of Agnes and Tobias: a dead male child, a failed daughter, an alcoholic sister and an (almost) broken marriage. All try to hold together the love and the hate (error, fright, plague) which, as the unsaid and unnamed "terror" of Edna and Harry, inhabits the house and requires a delicate human balancing act to keep safe the equilibrium between and among the characters. The rhetorical question of "love and error" lurks from all the deeds within and outside the couple(s) and implies a similitude between the characters in coping with these (similar to the "kindness" and "cruelty" of Jerry and Peter in *The Zoo Story*). The book Agnes reads in the drama shows the similitude of humans (at the level of sexes) in the balancing act(s) their relationships imply. This book stresses the fact that "sexes are reversing, or coming to resemble each other too much, at any rate"[45] and as such, another balancing act is uttered in terms of gender. The phrase from Agnes' book is similar to George's when he talks with Nick about the genes in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*? George states "people are rearranging my genes, so that everyone will be like everyone else."[46] Edna utters a similar sentence when she realizes that the balancing act made the lives of all characters similar: "Our lives are the same" while Agnes realizes that they "become allegorical" in their substitutive relations with each other.

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[44] Edward Albee *A Delicate Balance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 38–39.
[45] Ibid., 45.
[46] Edward Albee *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965), 29.

The great balancing act of the drama (and of human relations in it) is to reach the state of the "good enough motherhood" between humans, that is, an equilibrium of the envy-gratitude or love-hate, as shown by Donald Winnicott[47]. The balancing act takes place if a character is "good enough" to the other character in the course of the plot induced by the blindspot. Agnes and Julia finally verbalize this act of balancing[48], which stands at the root of all human relations:

> **Agnes**: The double position of seeing not only facts but their implications... There is *a balance to be maintained after all*, though the rest of you teether, unconcerned, or uncaring, *assuming* you're on level ground... by divine right, I gather, though that is hardly so. And if must be the fulcrum... I think I shall have a divorce.
> **Tobias:** Have a divorce?
> **Agnes**: No. No, Julia has them for all of us. Not even separation; that is taken care of, and in life: the gradual ...demise of intensity, the private preoccupations, the substitutions. *We become allegorical*, my darling Tobias... The individuality we hold so dearly sinks into crotchet; *we see ourselves repeated by those we bring into it all*, either by mirror or by rejection, honor or fault...
> **Julia**: Well, you are the fulcrum and all around here *the double vision, the great balancing act...(emphasis mine)*.[49]

The American Dream according to Ruby Cohn, strives like Eugene Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* "on social inanities"[50]. The characters are Mommy, Daddy, Grandma, Mrs. Barker and the Young Man. The

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[47] The characters in the play act as mothering agents. This mothering process, in Donald Winnicott's writings on the topic means that each human can act as a 'good enough mother', which means that it must balance (in a so-called transitional space) the quantity of love and hate proportionally in order to achieve maximum effect and response from the other person. It also means that each character is both good and bad at the same time but also that they are "sensitively using the transitional space". In other words, "the good enough mother actively adapts to the needs of the infant rather than the other way round." In Rosaliny Minsky, ed. *Psychoanalysis and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 114.

[48] In 1949 Albee wrote one of his apprentice works The City of People. "For the first time in Albee's work, the words "delicate balance" appear, referring to the that "shading between love and hate that exists between anybody that cares for one another". In Mel Gussow *Edward Albee. A Singular Journey. A Biography* (London. Oberon, 1999), 68.

[49] Edward Albee *A Delicate Balance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 58–59.

[50] Ruby Cohn *Edward Albee* (Minnepolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), 11.

drama tells everything about an unnamed American couple, which is unable to have an offspring in the household. Mommy and Daddy have already bought/adopted a child whom they have mutilated and dismembered in a process of dissatisfaction with the bought 'product' of the market economy. As Lee Baxandal pointed out, the characters of Albee are interrelated and cohesive in almost all of his plays because "the heart of his technique is an archetypal family unit"[51] where all the dilemmas, defeats, hopes and values of the American society—as the playwright sees them—are "tangibly compressed". As Albee writes in the *Preface* of the play, the drama is hoped to be one that "transcends the personal and the private". *The American Dream* is filled with references to the playwright's life[52], which are represented here in an abrasive manner. As Anita M. Stenz pointed out, it is a "nightmarish mad-cap cartoon"[53] of emotional crippling in the family that leads to excessive materialism and hypocrisy in the drama, which has an abrasive satirical tone. There is no separate description of the characters, their features can be seen through the course of the play. Mommy was a "deceitful little girl" and married Daddy because of money: "We were poor! But then I married you, Daddy, and now we're very rich."[54] The stereotypical roles in the family of *The American Dream* are changed since. During the plot time Mommy is the phallic woman, the *mater familias* of the household. Daddy was once "firm", "decisive", and "masculine" that made Mommy "shiver" and "faint" (and as an additional power attribute, he wanted to be a Senator but then changed his mind and wanted to be Governor). Despite his aims in the past, Mommy calls him a "hedgehog" because of his soft nature. Daddy is "turning into a jelly", he becomes indecisive and therefore Mommy says that he is "a woman" but not like Mrs. Barker nor like Mommy. Mrs. Barker is the professional woman of the Mommies grotesque gallery of Albee's dramas, who

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[51] Lee Baxandall "The Theater of Edward Albee". In Alvin B. Kernan *The Modern American Theater* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1967), 80–81.

[52] Mel Gussow Edward Albee: A Singular Journey. A Biography (London: Oberon, 1999), 141.

[53] Anita Maria Stenz *Edward Albee: The Poet of Loss* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1978), 25.

[54] Edward Albee *The American Dream.* In *New American Drama* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 30.

runs the business of the Bye-Bye adoption agency and sells 'adoptions' like normal products.

The Young Man of the play is the muscular movie-like faced man that Grandma invests with the role of the "van man". He looks "familiar" to Grandma and then to Mommy, too. He is the visible site for the blindspot of the play, who is the baby that had been once brought/adopted and then dismembered and killed by its foster parents. The Young Man's familiar looks are emphasized three times during the play (which means he is part of the enigma of the plot), since he is the twin brother of a child Mommy and Daddy once bought. The foster parents dismembered and finally killed this brother because they were not satisfied with him. The plot of the drama brings the dead child's substitution in the person of the Young Man, whom Grandma calls the "van man" and whom Mrs. Barker, as a good merchant, substitutes for the previously 'sold' child. The van man is, thus a fictional construct of Mommy and Daddy, which is made flesh by Grandma's witty substitution. The Young Man confesses that he lost his mother, never knew his father and had an "identical" twin brother who was separated and taken away from him. "We were torn apart", The Yong Man says. His brother was at his turn, torn apart by his new parents. At that time The Young Man felt that his twin brother's life was over because once his heart "became numb" as if the mutilation was taking place in his own body. From that moment on he was never able to love. This might have been the moment when Mommy and Daddy actually dismembered his twin brother[55].

The "van man" is the product of Mommy's and Daddy's imagination similar to the son of Martha and George from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. He is the "clean-cut, midwest farm boy type, almost insultingly good-looking in a typically American way" with a "good profile, straight noses, honest eyes, wonderful smile", in other words "the American Dream". 'He', as the van boy, was created

[55] "In all his work there are recurrent themes (and even character names, like Agnes, Amy, Ann, Toby, Fred): twins (male and female), sometimes separated at birth; children who died or were lost; strong mothers and weak fathers; dreamers and questers who are misunderstood and confused about their identity, sexual or otherwise." Mel Gussow "Albee's Village Decade". In Edward Albee. *A Singular Journey. A Biography* (London: Oberon, 1999), 85.

to discipline Grandma and to make her afraid if she proved too annoying for the couple. The reality of the van man's existence is reinforced by Mrs. Barker from the Bye-Bye Adoption Service, when the family does not want to accept that he is real. As an excellent opportunist, Mrs. Barker posits this van man as the guarantee-substitute for the wrong child, whom the parents destroyed.

> **Mrs. Barker**: The van man. The van man was here...
> **Mommy** [*near tears*]: No, no that's impossible. No. There's no such thing as the van man. There is no van man. We... we made him up.[56]

When The Young Man appears in the home of the couple, he seems very familiar to Mommy and Daddy. He strikingly resembles the blindspot-child of the drama. Mommy says he is "more like *it*", "a great more deal like *it*"(*emphasis mine*) *"It"* is the dead child, which did not even have a name. The lack of onomastics is caught in the dialogue of the parents and Mrs. Barker:

> **Mrs. Barker**:... Call him whatever you like. He's yours. Call him what you called the other one.
> **Mommy**: Daddy? What did we call the other one?
> **Daddy** [*puzzles*] Why ...[57]

Grandma is an old, "obscene" person. She is busy packing boxes for her alleged departure from home. She knows "what she says", as Daddy claims and she knows the twisted way of the shaken family romance. She does not complain she rather focuses on her exit from the imposed home, where she invites The Young Man and, in a witty manner, presents him as the van man that has come to take her away. Grandma in *The American Dream* and in the *Sandbox* is the sole human and generous character in the Albee *ménage* of characters. The model for the character of Grandma was Edward Albee's maternal Grandma Cotter, who was the closest to the playwright in his family and who was "an outlaw" as Edward. As the Young Man and Grandma in this play, Edward and Grandma Cotter formed in the home of the Albees, an alliance against the world, especially against

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[56] Edward Albee *The American Dream.* In *New American Drama* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 58.

[57] Edward Albee *The American Dream.* In *New American Drama* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 59.

the mother and father. They were, as the playwright remembers, like "two ends against the middle"[58]. Grandma uses the Uncle Henry *nom de boulangère* with which she wins the baking contest and earns enough money to depart on her own from the American Dream home. In terms of the dramatic structure she represents the figure, which indirectly induces epiphany in the play by recognizing the counterpart, the 'othered' half of the absent-present child. Her recognition of the epiphanic body as a substitution for the enigma of the play is uttered in a threefold repetition of the phrase "you look familiar". The newcomer van man, bitterly and melancholically answers to the threefold recognition in terms of the Platonic doxa: "I am incomplete, and I must therefore... compensate"[59]. This doxa promises an end that secures economic fulfillment for the American Dream couple (Mommy and Daddy) and for The Young Man, who has became in the meantime the American Dream boy.

For Albee, human relationships are always more important than conventions and social categories. *The American Dream* is an incursion into the human processes that occur between members of a family when the institution of marriage and the commercialism become more important than its participants. Here, the rhetoric of love and hate turns into the rhetoric of having or not having, that is possession or loss.

The *Marriage Play* is about the pros and cons of a possible divorce, a delicate balancing act of the two characters of the play, Gillian and Jack, the married couple. Gillian is a woman "in her early 50s" and Jack is a man "in his middle 50s". The play focuses on their George and Martha type of intellectual exchange. The discussion is at the expense of the seemingly liberating idea of divorce on the part of Jack. The verbal games the couple plays is symbolic of the emotional emptiness of their marriage. Gillian's exit way from boredom is her diary, Jack's is his repetitive 'threat' with divorce. Martha and George in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* start and end their game with the rhyming device of a nursery rhyme. The *Marriage Play* begins the

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[58] Mel Gussow Edward Albee: A Singular Journey. A Biography (London: Oberon, 1999), 33.

[59] Edward Albee *The American Dream.* In *New American Drama* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 53.

game of the spouses with Jack's "I'm leaving you". This sentence will later develop into a spontaneous research into their common past, that is, into a double-edged talk. "Talk" is the word with which Gillian defines her sentences when she says that she is "talking as not to scream". With very efficient verbal devices, Gillian and Jack repeat the *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* game of love-hate that Martha defines as "sad, sad, sad". Gillian paraphrases Martha when she further echoes the melancholic dictum about their marriage: "sad husband, sad wife, sad day, sad life"[60]. While in their matrimonial games the "rhetoric is beyond" Jack, both attempt to "de-Siamese" themselves into separate entities in different ways. Jack repeats his wish many times, but Gillian, as most of the women characters of Albee, holds the final punchline about the nature of the human bonds and individuation in marriage:

> **Gillian**: ...marriage does not make two people one, it makes two people two—a good marriage, a useful marriage- makes individuals! That when two people chose to be together though they're strong enough to be alone, then you have a good marriage. Has ours been a good marriage? Are we two? Clearly we've not become each other, we've become ourselves—I guess we have, and maybe for the first time. With any luck we've not compensated, we've complemented.[61]

In the process of duality, Gillian is writing a diary she calls 'The Book of Days', which is "more of a journal", a record of their encounters during marriage. In its functional aspect this diary is similar to the book of George in *Virginia Woolf*, which is the story of the fictional boy, which was then George. In metonymical terms, the two books are substitutes for love/child/son. As she says, it is "a record of our touching". Gillian recognizes that her life with Jack is a chain of "successes and failures" and that they had "good times and bad". Jack is sometimes "Mrs. Stud himself" while other times "ya don't have **it** in ya" (*emphasis mine*). This deictic **it** is similar to the one that is uttered in *The American Dream*, can be compared to the euphemized Teddy in *A Delicate Balance* or the son in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?and* the **"this"** that "happened" in *The Zoo Story*. In the process of individuation and complementation which turns Gillian

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[60] Edward Albee *Marriage Play* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1995), 9.
[61] Ibid., 39–40.

into the writer of her diary, Jack is his own observer, who does not write but verbally shares his conclusions:

> **Jack**: ...I am aware that I am the object I am studying, that I am my own subject, or object, if you will. I become aware... well, yes, that's it! I become aware of awareness I have never known before, of clarity, of... revelation, I suppose. Mystics must have it, clairvoyants, the possessed.[62]

The deictic **"this"** covers the blindspot of the drama, which is unveiled by the flaw of the action the declaration of divorce and a recorded event from Venice that is written in the 'Book of the Days' brings. This event records Gillian making love with Jack. Jack realizes that he was not the person Gillian made love to, instead, Gillian had an encounter with a stranger she thought it was her husband. The blindspot in this drama is the lack of a bodily 'outcome' of the marriage, whose place the 'Book of the Days' takes as a fictional product, an intimate outcome of Gillian's and Jack's marriage. The intimate diary of Gillian depicts the lack of instinctual impulse between the spouses, which, as a result, could have made a child possible. The outcome of the impossible continuation on the part of Jack is his exit from the matrimonial bond in his one-sentence fiction of saying: "I'm leaving you". The marriage of the two is 'saturated' and empty at the same time because passion, as the key word for the lack that is present in their life, needs to be revitalized. The last pages of the play concentrate on the issue of the passion perceived as instinct, and as the rhetoric of love and hate, which is linked with the animal realm similar to that of *The Zoo Story*. Jack explains this context:

> **Jack**: Instinct tells us everything: that if there are rules run counter to our gut, then *they* are wrong; we are the animals, and we smell the kill and the rest is fine unless it gets in the way. We understand it *all* when we become animals, when we give in to **it**—standing at night in the forest, in the snow when we become the wolf: *then* we understand it. Man is different man is the lordly beast. We know these things by gut; when passion dies...[63]

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[62] Ibid., 21.
[63] Ibid., 37.

The blindspot of the drama covers the issue of the lack of (any more) 'children' (referring to the book of intimacies). The child is a fictional one, like the son(ny boy) in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The penultimate page of the drama contains Gillian's recognition of the fact that children are not possible because the two sides of the couple have become similar (an allusion to a homograph insertion): "Are we supposed to get *married* again? *I* can't have children anymore, I can't make a full marriage: I'm shaped to you". The issue of the blindspot is connected with the passion induced by the drives. This passion is redefined by Gillian, who does not blame the lack of passion but rather its changeable nature. She explains that passion needs redefinition. However, both agree, passion is rooted in the rhetoric of love and hate, on which both have built their marriage, in which they are irrevocably intertwined and—from time to time, as Jack shows with his intention of leaving and divorce—confused.

> **Gillian**: Passion in a marriage never dies it changes. When the passion of passion wanes there are all the others waiting to rush in—the passion of loss, of hatred, the passion of indifference; the ultimate, the finally satisfying passion of nothing. You know nothing of the passion; you confuse rut with everything.[64]

Counting the Ways[65] is the bare analysis of He and She, two characters with generic names. The play aims the lack or loss of meaning in the relation between two people in marriage trying to escape the responsibility intimacy requires. The number two employed by the playwright in this drama evokes the symbolism of the number. Two means, as Philip C. Kolin wrote, "disunity,

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[64] Ibid., 37.

[65] The play has been compared with Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*, "the very type of romantic play of the heart at which Albee aims his vaudevillian parody, although in fairness one must note that Albee admires Williams as a playwright... in many ways Albee's play is a direct response to the kind of theatre of the heart projected by Tenneessee Williams. *The Glass Menagerie* and *Counting the Ways* push aside the convention of realism. Both plays can be called memory plays. For Williams a depiction of memory "is seated predominantly in the heart", while for Albee memory is a non-emotional faculty." Philip C. Kolin "Edward Albee's Counting the Ways". In Julian N. Wasserman, ed. *Edward Albee. An Interview and Essays* (Houston: The University of St. Thomas, 1983), 136.

separation, and ultimately death"[66] in *Counting the Ways*. The absurdity of the emptied relationship of He and She is accentuated by the fact that both characters enter Scenes 10, 11, and 12 with a flower (a rose) symbolizing the same thing (as their mutual possession). The rose represents love but also bear the hidden meaning of its opposite, hate[67]. He and She pluck the petals in order to find an answer to their search for love but they do not ask each other about it, they fear direct questions and mediate their wish through the petals of the rose. Counting the petals has a contrapuntal effect and the play has a centripetal effect because of its characters that strive on the borders of insecure feelings between love and hate. The play starts and ends with the commonplace question of "Do you love me?". Love is the main structuring device that demonstrates the lack of meaning in this marriage, where one has to be able to communicate with the partner "in order to be aware of one's own self"[68]. There are no specific details nor descriptions given about the characters, they are detached selves that live amid fragmented and momentary talks that induce the threat of the incertitude. She is the rational woman, while he is a passive man, less vocal and as such less vulnerable. Both parody themselves and of course each other. As Philip C. Kolin shows in "The Ways of Losing Heart", the parody is best exemplified by the domestic substitution of the artistic phrase, which applies to both characters:

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[66] Ibid., 125.

[67] In *Counting the Ways*, roses are the symbols of the unsaid questions and uncertainties. "Roses, especially white ones, are emblems of silence, being the flowers of Harpocrates, God of Silence. This is the origin of the phrase 'under the rose', used in reference to things said that must not be repeated... The first roses were all white but some turned red when they were stained by blood... It is exceedingly unlucky to scatter petals of a rose worn upon the person or carried in the hand... Roses, like other flowers, are ill-omened if they bloom out of season". Cf. E. and M. A. Radford, (Christina Hole, ed.) *Encyclopedia of Superstitions* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 285–286. Also "The single rose is a symbol of completion, of consummate achievement and perfection." Cf. J. A Cirlot *A Dictionary of Symbols* (trans. Jack Sage), (New York: Philosophical Library, 1983), 275.

[68] Philip C. Kolin "Edward Albee's Counting the Ways". In Julian N. Wasserman, ed. *Edward Albee. An Interview and Essays* (Houston: The University of St. Thomas, 1983), 128.

> ... He's switching the words of an Auden poem. He substitutes the domestic "shirts" from Auden's "water" in "Thousands have lived without love but none without water"... A little later He substitutes each of the ingredients from his wife's list for Auden's "water". When He exchanges "creme brulée" for "water", he does admit: "It lacks... well, it doesn't... there's not as much resonance that way... Creme Bruleé for water, or shirts for water, for that matter, but if parody isn't a diminishment... well, then, was it worth it in the first place?". He and She deliberately parody serious ideas and words from poetry, thus showing little if any aesthetic appreciation for the material which they cite. Such are the people whom Albee consistently terms "Philistines" in his public addresses.[69]

The petal picking test veils the very visible blindspot of the play, which is the rose itself, as the common flower for both He and She. The rose is present when these two people cannot communicate and counts the ways of living. Loving and hating for them. In other words, the rose is a metonymy of the couple's living together, a metaphoric child with the help of which both can 'measure the love the other. Its petals 'count the ways' in which love and hate can be lived and interpreted. The flower, as the adopted baby in *The American Dream*, is dismembered petal by petal by He, and then has to be replaced by another one. The petals 'strip out' the truth they two never mentioned or avoided answering. Since it is a symbolic construct of the unsaid desires, the rose stands for the imaginary child of the two, as the sonny boy in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* who is never to be 'mentioned' to anyone else. The rose's function (besides hiding the blindspot) is also to make She and He ridiculous and to make them subject to (reader's and audience's) laughter. The blindspot rose is made devoid of any content of sentiment because the people of the cast fear intimacy and directness. It is a structuring device, a tool with which the characters can 'measure' the parameters of their relationship. (Similar questions and variant affirmations are found the relative-play of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, where the George and Martha are figuratively counting the petals of "the lion's tooth", the snapdragon).

> **He**: She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not.

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[69] Ibid., 133–134.

> **She**: He loves me? He loves me not? ...Not me loves he? Me loves he? Not me loves he? Me loves he?[70]

Love seems to have its limits between He and She. Their love borders on hate, which lives on the anxiety of the incertitude. Similar to the main couple's life in *Counting the Ways*, the rhetoric of love-hate, as played by Martha and George, Gillian and Jack, Agnes and Tobias, will end in the recognition of the verisimilitude as uttered by Edna in *A Delicate Balance*. She says that "our lives are the same", which is a similar proposition to Julia's earlier exclamation when she claims that "all the *happy* families are alike!". The character He in *Counting the Ways* posits the same idea in the interrogative sentence of "we are each other's rod?" Charlie and Nancy from *Seascape*, the seaside nomads agree with the congruence of the relations bluntly put in Charlie's statement of "mutate or perish" and in Nancy's theory of marriage: "we have nothing holding us, except together". In this context all the Albee couples are different and both are the same. All are governed by the rhetoric of love in the pattern of what Peter Brooks calls in *Reading for the Plot* the same-but-different.

Finding the Sun is one of Albee's "sand plays" (together with *Box*, and *The Sandbox*), an allegory about the celestial body of the *Sun*. The play follows the route of the sun's ascent towards its zenith via the (human) positions characters take on the beach, and finally focuses on the youngest character, the *son* of Edmee. The highest peak of the solar route is achieved when the oldest man in the play dies and the youngest boy (son) ripens to knowledge and consciousness. In this context, the logic behind the words of **sun** and **son** links the meaning of the first in the second. The sun, according to C. E. Cirlot represents the *Sol in homine* or "the invisible essence of the celestial Sun that nourishes the inborn fire of *Man*"[71]. The link of the son, (whose name is Fergus) and the solar body (the sun) is emphasized on the first page

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[70] Edward Albee Counting the Ways. In The Plays. Vol. Three. All Over. Seascape Counting the Ways. Listening (New York: Atheneum, 1982), 13–17.

[71] The alchemic concept of the *Sol in homine* is an "early pointer to the way the astral body has latterly been interpreted by psychoanalysts, narrowing its meaning down to that of heat or energy, equivalent to the fire of life and libido. Hence Jung's point that the sun is, in truth, a symbol of the source of life and of the ultimate wholeness of man". In J. E. Cirlot *A Dictionary of Symbols* (trans. Jack Sage), (New York: Philosophical Library, 1983), 319.

of the play. The drama opens with the word "finding the sun" uttered nine times by each of the characters. The last page links the wish of the play's beginning with Edmee's inquiry and search for her son. "Fergus", the name of the son that disappeared in the meantime, is uttered also nine times like the wish to find the sun. This time, the 'sun' is the 'son', and their relation is made obvious since the drama opens with the search for the celestial body that is found and ends with the search for the son, who will not be found.

The eight characters of the play are people on a beach in bright sun. They all tend to find the best places for their bodies, therefore they move from place to place in order to "find the sun". Abigail and Benjamin, Cordelia and Daniel, and Gertrude and Henden are married couples. Edmee and Fergus, a mother and her son represent the last symbolic 'couple'. Abigail is twenty-three, with "pinched" features. She is neither pretty nor plain. Her husband, Benjamin is thirty. He is blond and "willowy handsome". The two are married but seem to have problems in their marriage. Cordelia is twenty-eight and she is "attractive in a cold way", with a "good figure". Her husband, Daniel is thirty-seven, "dark, tall and good-looking". Cordelia and Daniel seem to have a working agreement in their marriage. Gertrude, who is a sixty year-old elegant outdoors woman, is Cordelia's mother. She is married to Henden, who is seventy and "looks like a diplomat". He is also Daniel's father. Edmee is forty-five and she is a stylish matron that takes excessive care of her son, Fergus, who is the youngest character in the play. He is sixteen. At a point in the play Henden even tell Fergus that there is "no such an age", although symbolically their age is correlated by the number seven that denotes both the young man and the old man. Henden is seventy (70 as 7 + 0 = 7), Fergus is sixteen (16 as1 + 6 = 7)[72]. Edmee has an enigmatic name that can be

[72] When talking about his own age, the playwright quotes this passage of the old man's and young man's age from *Finding the Sun*. "For his seventieth birthday on March 12, 1998, he [Edward Albee] flew back to New York from Houston for a small dinner party given in his honor by Elizabeth McCann. That afternoon he spoke about aging: 'When the old man in *Finding the Sun* asks the boy how old he is, the boy says: "I'm 16, and the man says, "Don't be silly: There's no such an age". Sometimes I feel sixteen, sometimes younger. Sometimes I feel a healthy forty. The only way I ever feel anything close to my age is the way people treat

read as the doubling of the name **Ed**$_{ward}$ of the playwright {'Ed'+'me(e)} and the reflexive, narcissistic **me**$_{e}$. The couple of the mother and son is the doubling of the name of the implied author, since it clearly identifies with the reflexively named 'Ed' and 'me(e)' (or that of the first two and the last two letters of the name of the playwright: **Ed**$_{ward}$ linked with the help of the initial of the **m**$_{other}$ with $_{Alb}$**ee**), which shows a bond of narcissistic nature, on the one hand on the part of the playwright and, on the other hand, between the mother {'me(e)'} and the son ('Ed')—another narcissistic bond is made explicit in the relation of Daniel and Benjamin, which the son of Edmee indirectly witnesses—. Edmee is wisely questioned in the drama about Fergus and about their relation.

> **Gertrude**: Young man. [To Edmee]. Is **that** yours?
> **Edmee**: Yes, yes, he is.
> **Gertrude**: What is he to you, or I am being nosy?...
> **Edmee**: What *is* he to me?...[73]

The answer posited in Scene 3 is given in Scene 8 and shows an identification of the son with the mother (who in turn identifies him with her dead husband):

> **Edmee**: Well, now, to answer your question—your pry, to be more accurate, about Fergus. What he is to me is too much. He is my son—he is: real mother, real son. And since my husband died—his father—he has been the "man" in my life, so to speak... There is, I think—there may be an—attachment transcends the usual, the socially admitted, that is, by which I mean: given the provocation, *Fergus would be* ***me*** *in a moment.* A mother knows these things and even admits knowing them... Sometimes. He doesn't know it, or, if he does sense it, is polite or shrewd enough to pretend he does not... (*emphasis mine*)[74]

By the depicted excessive identification with his mother, Fergus is the most complex character of the play. Edmee, the mother and Fergus, her son, androgynously counterpoint and take care of each

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me." In Mel Gussow *Edward Albee: A Singular Journey. A Biography* (London: Oberon, 1999), 395.

[73] Edward Albee *Finding the Sun* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1994), 7.

[74] Ibid., 15.

other. Fergus[75] is blond, handsome, healthy kid with a swimmer's body. He is also the enigmatic character, the blindspot and is he the homograph of the play (he is the one outside Daniel and Benjamin that shares not only the same game with them but has similar feature to them). The emblematic name of his mother veils him as the name of the author's enigma of the play. The ambiguities of the play do not stop at the character of the blindspot. The cast encounters other misplaced characters that Fergus senses to be problematic as well. Abigail, as the plain figure in the "complex twine" of human relationships in *Finding the Sun*, is married to Benjamin, whom she calls "a fairy". Cordelia and Daniel seem to share a sibling-type of relationship: " 'we're such good friends'... that isn't exactly your usual marriage isn't precisely"[76], while the relationship of Daniel and Benjamin is explicitly stated in the play (they "were 'involved'", Henden says, "they were lovers"). He is present at the discussion-game of Benjamin and Daniel and proposes that the three of them "play catch". This is the game of their unsaid love, of the dramatic primal scene of the play. This game promotes the drama, *i.e.* the action, because it generates curiosity, the drive to know and to see the unsaid. The hidden love of the two men, as seen by Fergus, alternates with the beach ball game in which the ball and the words are both 'thrown' to each other. Fergus is the viewer of the game and he concludes the hidden fact:

> **Fergus**: I know. You two are presently married to those ladies over there, although... since the two of you have been... uh... intimately involved? There is a question floating around this particular area of the beach as to whether these marriages were made in heaven.[77]

The rhetoric of love and hate is substituted in this drama by "pleasure into pain". This dictum is uttered by Fergus, who in his final

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[75] The figure of Fergus strikingly coincides with that of the playwright from the Mel Gussow biography. The site of the boyhood is the same, the wealthy mother, the family and the private school and even the so-called WASP education the family wanted him to have. "A *New England* boyhood... *wealthy mother* and all, *private school*, *WASP* education. ASP, to be precise", says Fergus in the play.(*emphasis mine*), Ibid., 22.

[76] Ibid., 24.

[77] Ibid., 26.

recognition of the nature of the human bonds leaves the beach and metaphorically continues following and "finding the sun". While Henden is the sacrificial body that dies in the end, Fergus is the epiphanic body that gives hope to a new telling ('finding') of the play. All characters find pleasure (the sun) in order then to gain pain. **Hend**en will die (has the '**end**' inserted in the name)[78], Gertrude will renew her skin cancer from the sun, Abigail will try to commit suicide, Edmee will temporarily lose Fergus, who disappears, while all the other characters will continue their socially reinforced heterosexual matrix (Cordelia, Daniel and Benjamin). After the sun (and the son) has (have) disappeared, it epiphanically returns and everything starts from a new beginning.

> **Edmee**: (A Frightened child) Fergus?
> **Gertrude**: He'll come back, my dear, they do. The sun's returning. What glory! What... wonder! (Indeed the sun is returning)[79]

The end of *Finding the Sun* equals the end of *A Delicate Balance* (which is uttered by Agnes in the end). Both plays, as other plays of Albee, tend to reach the state of delicate balance by the end. Agnes describes this end as a possible circular beginning, which has been started by the finally revised nursery rhyme of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?:* "Well, they're safely gone... and we'll all forget... quite soon. Come now, we can begin the day"[80]. Martha and George unveil the enigma of their love and the enigma of the drama through a verbal and textual production. The result is a fictional son, an imaginary, alternative form of love. In *The Play About he Baby* there are two characters that are bound in the complex process of having

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[78] The sunwise turn of Henden implies his "walking funeral", his death, after the beach procession of finding the sun is over. "The custom of turning the way of the sun, or *deiseil*, when performing any important ceremony or luck-bringing rite, is very old, and has its roots in ancient sun-worship. The sun, the source of all earthly life and fertility, seems to go from east to west, and its worshippers did likewise on every ritual occasion... The dead also went to their last rest thus. When walking funerals were more usual than they are now, the coffin was often taken once or three times round the graveyard before the burial, or in some parishes, round the churchyard." In E. and M. A. Radford, (Christina Hole, ed.) *Encyclopedia of Superstitions* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 329–330.

[79] Edward Albee *Finding the Sun* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1994), 39.

[80] Edward Albee *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965).

(and losing) a baby and two characters in desiring to have the baby. The Girl and the Boy seem to have a "baby-poo" which is fictionalized by the end with the mediation of the old(er) couple, Woman and Man. What seemed real is transformed into an imaginary product, "a baby, perhaps?"[81]

The "complex twine" that exists between and among the characters of Albee's cast is based on the belief that has been earlier stated by Leonardo da Vinci and quoted by Nicholas Mirzoeff. This belief holds the idea that one body alone "cannot signify perfectly without outside assistance" and needs to be "complemented and supplemented with artificial techniques of the body"[82]. This technique has been fully implemented in the dramaturgy of Edward Albee through his characters in order to make visible its major theme, the figure of the absent/present child.

[81] Edward Albee *The Play About the Baby* (Dramatists Service, New York, [1997], 2002), 27.

[82] Nicholas Mirzhoeff "Body Fragments Versus Universal Forms". *In Bodyscape. Art, Modernity and the Ideal Figure* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 21.

LÁSZLÓ DÁNYI

ON THE BAD SIDE OF THE FENCE: FIASCOS OF SOUTHERN ETHOS

In an interview William Styron (1925–) admits that his books "revolve around the persecuted, the failure, the commoner, slaves, those who suffer, those who are on the bad side of the fence" (Leon 143). In this brief essay, firstly, I will reveal the building blocks of the "fence" that comprise cultural and ethos patterns of the South. Secondly, from among the fictional characters stricken by smothering guilt—Nat Turner not bearing marginal existence, Captain Mannix not conforming to the military system, Cass Kinsolving achieving freedom by murdering Mason Flagg, the trio of Sophie, Nathan and Stingo struggling with the burden of Auschwitz—I will present Peyton Loftis' mental entrapments as an example in the second part of this paper.

Attempts to prove the distinctiveness of the South have always created problems due to the difficulty of establishing a proper definition that would encapsulate the uniqueness of the Southern states and their culture. The various fields of inquiry have not offered a clear-cut definition of what the South is. From among the umpteen peculiarities that would justly demonstrate differences even in weather patterns and foodways I would like to list some.

The South could be regarded as a geographical region, but the borderline separating the North from the South is the arbitrarily drawn Mason-Dixon Line, which contravenes any idea to find a natural or geographical boundary between the two halves of the nation. The Appalachians and the Mississippi River, the two major geographical

landmarks, would rather form a link than a border between the two regions.

The other factor which could prove the otherness of the South has become the "peculiar institution." However, slavery as an institution and not as reminiscence is related to the antebellum, pre-Civil War era, and even within that time span the controversial slavery issue alone in itself cannot vindicate the uniqueness of the South without considering the attendant social, sociological, political, ideological and historical ramifications. Nevertheless, I admit that the reminiscence of slavery triggers discussions about such opposing tendencies and counter-images as sentimentalism, nostalgia, and heroism versus violence, racism, caste, and xenophobia either in the dominant white society or the African American community of the South, or in both. To sum it up, the question of slavery overlaps time, space and disciplines and the reminiscence of slavery provokes thoughts and ideas in Styron's fiction.

Yet, without studying the complex aspects of slavery our view will be confined to the "inevitably tragic history of an Old South doomed by the burden of slavery" (Ranson 107). The slavery issue cannot be ignored, but it must be placed within the context of what I recognise as the Southern ethos which is embedded in Southern culture.

The definition of culture has always been problematic but essential too. By approaching the question from the angle of the social aspect, I will quote a definition which is basically acceptable: that of A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn's. The two scholars collected 164 definitions of culture and they concluded the following:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action. (181)

As Richard E. Sykes notes the explicit and implicit patterns are often referred to as overt and covert patterns in other works on culture. In his essay "American Studies and the Concept of Culture: A Theory and Method," he traces the history of the various definitions of culture

from a sociological aspect and, finally, provides a lengthy definition of it. His definition regards culture as a "pattern of constructs of modes of meanings, values and ideas about acting, inferred from noninstinctive human behavior" (77). He surmises that cultures can be characterized by certain patterns of behavior that he refers to as "culture construct" (78) patterns, and he differenciates three patterns, namely, avowed, masked and metapatterns. Sykes confesses that there are no absolute distinctions between these patterns, however, his intention is to provide a clearer definition than Kroeber and Kluckhohn's, whose definition, at least according to Sykes, suffers from considerable ambiguity in a sense that it does not define the exact place of myths and symbols in the pattern of culture.

Later on in the essay it is revealed that Sykes would like to clarify his terminology related to the definition of culture by belittling or even eliminating the significance of myth and symbol, which do not find their place in his distinction. Consequently, he surmises the following:

> A myth is simply a pattern of values which has real force in the life of a people and which has received metaphoric expression, as contrasted with values and ideas which have only intellectual appeal. The use of such words as "myth" and "symbol" tends to obscure rather than emphasize this distinction. To refer to a pattern as a myth only implies that it is no longer masked. (83)

It is highly debatable that the significance of myths and symbols can be ignored or whisked away as if they were mere creations of the divine and the mysterious without having any intellectual appeal. On the one hand, it is very often the ambiguous nature of myths and symbols that clarifies seemingly not understandable aspects of behavior, on the other hand, it must be recognized, appreciated and noted that the world of clear-cut definitions, answers and categories coexists with the world of hopes, beliefs, ambiguities and questions, furthermore, values and ideas may stem from the latter world, and may allude to metaphoric images. The analysis of myths cannot be discarded because the myth system of the South contains such elements that prove the uniqueness of the region.

What Sykes negligently mentions as obscuring the distinctions points to a major function of myths and symbols, and this function is

to blur the clear-cut boundaries between the patterns of culture, which is expressed by Sykes himself when he writes that there are no absolute distinctions between these patterns. Myths and symbols convey ambiguous ideas and values because human life is ambiguous, and the only certainty that can be attached to them is that they offer hope for a better future and simultaneously make the individual realize the futility of their existence. Later on I will be engaged in investigating the realization of futility when writing about the significance of failure.

Concurrence may be established with Maurice Boyd and Donald Worchester's concept of culture in their *American Civilization: An Introduction to the Social Sciences*. In their view "all cultures share certain elements because they must provide for the same basic human needs, no two cultures express these elements or meet these needs in exactly the same way" (21). This statement confirms that a people's culture is an integrated whole in which social norms, habits, laws, institutions, roles, statuses, beliefs, values and myths constitute broad patterns of thought and action, but this definition also supports the idea that the elements of the integrated whole do not appear in exactly the same way in other patterns.

The patterns of thought and action unravel themselves through the characters' equivocal and impregnable multiform relationships to them. My intention is not to seek an impeccable answer to the question of what THE quality of this relationship is like. Within the confines of this essay and considering my firm belief in the ambiguity of the topic the only aim I might achieve is to examine in what ways are literary characters disposed to or/and against those patterns that constitute the Southern ethos.

From among the multitude of definitions and implications of ethos, in my understanding ethos in a society contains those universal or objective elements of myths, values, norms and institutions that make societies and individuals different from each other. The term itself expresses the complexity of discourse about ethos because the universalizing tendency and the striving for uniqueness are both embedded in it. I use "ethical" as the adjective describing the qualities and the different fields of ethos.

Platon and later on Aristotle differenciated ethos referring to contentions and those moral norms that radiate from them, and éthos encapsulating the moral character and the moral feature. Out of these two definitions my usage of the word ethos is closer to what the two Greek philosophers called ethos, that is why I rely on that form, however, I borrow the quality of independence, individuality and non-conformity of éthos.

I presume that to a certain degree characters are culturally determined and they cannot fully escape the ethos of their group or community. By limiting the validity of ethos, I assume that ethos elements are entangled in gynoscopic relationships with one another and can be crystallized into four major groups, and these are 1/universal, 2/ regional and group, 3/ individually sustained and 4/ individually conducted. The expressions only denote peaks in each category, and each division shares common elements with others, and at the blurred borderline of each several other categories could be established. The ethos of a people is projected onto, is mirrored in, and radiates from the personality and disposition of the individual whose thoughts, ideas, values and actions are immersed in the ethos of the people. The individual's thoughts, ideas and activities are projected onto different fields of the ethos that are complex patterns of institutions that cluster social norms around particular demands.

Universal ethos captures those myths, values, norms, institutions and firmly held beliefs that transcend nations and peoples, and widely recognized and accepted by most people. In regional ethos the aforementioned elements of ethos are accepted by nations, peoples, ethnic groups, whereas group patterns validate themselves in the conventions, norms and behavioral code systems of professional and social groups.

I divided individual ethos (which is an individual's ethos here) into two spheres—individually sustained and individually conducted—because on a theoretical basis the individual is aware of certain elements of the other ethos groups, and I also believe in the personal practical applicability and manipulative force of ethos in the field of behavior. In this distinction an individual's concepts of right patterns of behavior are compared to the individual's particular actions and thoughts which are in an "avowing-disavowing" relationship with the

former category. The characteristic features of these ethos groups will unravel themselves through the analyses of Peyton Loftis' encounters with the aforementioned ethos groups.

The examination of the individual's attitude to these ethos groups raises two questions: in what ways the whole, the universal and the general are related to the part, the particular and the special; and how the individual is linked to the four ethos groups.

I assume that first the individual possesses general notions referring to the whole structure of ethos, and he acquires certain preconceptions that describe mainly the first two ethos groups. Later on he links elements of the last two ethos group to the first two. So the individual has his concepts and pictures of general notions, and then in the light of those general concepts he can judge over his own thoughts, ideas and actions, and he visualizes himself related to the totality. The elements of the first two ethos categories precede the appearance of the elements of the two latter groups. To make it more plastic, in this ethos system the first two groups form the core (which is by far not an unbreakable shell), and elements of the other two groups are attached to it.

The "bad side of the fence" as implied in the title can be comprehended by introducing the terms "pathos" and "pathetic". In my understanding pathos denotes the personal or emotional element in the ethos of a society, or a person. The reason why I found it adequate to use the word pathos is that it adds a very important shade of meaning to the relationship of the individual to the elements of the four categories. This further shade of meaning conveys the quality of suffering and sorrow of those dangling characters who are representatives of that twentieth century man whose existential dilemma of being forces him to struggle persistently to come to terms with a universe which does not offer any points of linkage to the individual seeking a raison d'être. Finally, the failure of the individual's struggle ignites pathos that can even reach the level of being apocalyptic, which here means that it can create such realms of ethos where darkness, obscurity and uncertainty rule behind the camouflage of social and personal order.

Failure, or fiasco as it is denoted in my title, is the key word describing a dominant characteristic feature of the individual's

relationship to my four ethos categories. Instead of saying that there are some reverses and set-backs in human life, I would rather announce—without any implication of pessimism but with the implication of persistence and endurance—that ultimately almost all of the characters' strivings end in failure and they must face this. Most of the errands in life do not work properly, and this fact must be coped with persistence and stoic acceptance. If we observe the cyclical patterns of ethos 1—intentions-acts-consequences—ethos 2, it is vindicated that intentions prove to be incongruent with the final outcome of acts. Owing to this deterioriation in the trajectory from ethos 1, which is the set of norms considered before acts, and ethos 2, which is the set of norms out of which judgments spring up after acts, most of the situations in which characters act are humiliating. They are commited to failure because their acts are not only determined by the past and the present but also by the future which on the one hand imposes judgments over the acts and even intentions, on the other hand the "what might they say" brings the influence of the future into our decisions.

The juxtaposition of ethos to pathos unveils their relationship to each other. Ethos approaches the problem from the point of view of a system (group, community, society, etc.), whereas pathos from the individual's point of view. Ethos is the nicely and properly sewn textile with immaculately woven fibres, and pathos is the labor with all the struggle, frustration and complacency through which individual patterns appear on it.

As the previous parts show I try to formulate a theoretical network related to the "structure" of ethos, which could establish the core consideration of this essay. In spite of all my strivings to pave the way for my analysis I must also admit the following discrepancies.

Firstly, my assumption is that the elements of the aforementioned ethos system can be observed from different angles in the author-work-reader triangle, and can only be differentiated arbitrarily, therefore in a literary work they are interrelated and they constitute different systems depending on the reader's and the author's modes of critical understanding which is "undermined by a family of metaphors to which we continue to cling with obsessive tenacity" (Stevick 192). Furthermore, in deconstructionist ethics even the ethos of reading

offers a starting point for a field of study which presupposes the "*reine Sprache* is the *Sache* of reading" (Critchley 46). So pure speech is the matter of reading, in other words, the reader has to differenciate between what is said in the text and what the text says, and he has to be faithful to "*the law to which the text is subject.* This law is the matter or *Sache* of reading" (46).

Secondly, nobody has ever lived under the regulations of a purely ethical world, yet the existence of the awareness of the norms, rules and values of a world like that is unquestionable. Not only are we conscious of the commands and imperatives of that world but they also influence our decisions, and we often act in accordance with ethical norms. Notwithstanding the presence of moral norms in our awareness, not any society can fully erase, or create the social apotheosis of moral norms.

What endows ethos with such a strength that we cannot sweep it away, and such a weakness that it can never gain overwhelming dominance? We do not want to do away with it because we need it and cling to it with such tenacity that we try to rationalize our successes and mainly our failures with its help. Ethos plays the role of a faux ami in the friendship with rationale, and we do not usually recognize it, or do not want to notice it. We are fallible individuals who nourish our firm belief that nothing is impossible, or inaccessible to our modern and enlightened mind, and the conquest of the universe of knowledge is just a stonethrow. We wish to make sense of the world around us, and cannot bear the existence of white spots and gaps that could be filled with "just because", so we try to explain even the unexplainable which, in this case, is our ethos. But this norm and value producing and legitimizing tendency keeps our ethos and the discourse about it alive. The innocents, the ones with good intentions and criminal intentions, the victims and the victimizers, the impeccant and the miscreant, the pure and the sinner all resort to ethical judgments concerning their own and others' lives and acts.

Ethos cannot gain absolute power in any society because of the latent incongruency in the ethos-intentions-acts-consequences-ethos circle. Earlier I mentioned the significance of failure that arises from this incongruency.

Thirdly, as it is implied by the title of my paper, system to me does not mean THE ethos structure in a literary work, or a permanent, unified system, but the sui generis recuperation and appearance of the ethos elements in literary works. Very often when writing about literary characters' motives, acts and the consequences of the acts in the light of the ethos structure I will have to discard the word "structure", since it "carries with it connotations of economy, symmetry, accountable proportion, organic form" (Stevick 199).

In this essay Peyton's struggle illustrates the individual aspect of ethos, and in the light of all the other ethos categories I examine some aspects of the complex relationship between individually sustained and individually conducted ethos in *Lie Down in Darkness*. This analysis will indicate how the Southern literary tradition stays alive in Styron's fiction through specifying elements of the Southern ethos.

Referring back to the title of the essay I wish to conclude the first part by stating that the method I employ conveys an exploration of those social roles, role expressions and role playing that Styron's characters are involved in. What I mean by roles, role playing and expressions coincides with Laurence Thomas's view:

> It is obvious, I trust, that role playing is virtually inescapable, since all of us either occupy some institutional position or fall into some significant social category. Gender-based or familial roles come quickly to mind here. Generally, we play one or both of these roles throughout our lives. In truth, the majority of us occupy a number of roles simultaneously. Someone may at once be a professor, spouse, parent, church deacon, and member of a company's board of trustees, although it is rather unlikely that she will have to play all of these roles simultaneously. Still, she may experience tension on account of the demands of these roles. Her church's position on an important social issue may be somewhat at odds with the policies of the company on whose board of trustees she sits. (115)

I surmise that the core of the Southern characters' ethical fiascos hides somewhere behind these roles and the attendant actions and motives that permeate the Southern background which inescapably permeates them. The questions are: what are the confines of the roles mentioned by Laurence Thomas and to what extent can Southern characters freely deter from them.

The second part of this paper aims to adapt the aforementioned principles to a specific character's striving. Peyton Loftis' fiasco is foreshadowed by the description of her desperate struggle to deliver herself. The same idea is worded by Sophie Zawistowska in Styron's *Sophie's Choice*:

"It was like finding something precious in a dream where it is all so real—something or someone, I mean, unbelievably precious—only to wake up and realize the precious person is gone. Forever! I have done that so many times in my life, waking up with that loss" (Styron, *Sophie* 282). Peyton's quest for meaning which leads to the "absurd awakening" is the realization of Peyton Loftis's certainty about the absurdity of her life.

Peyton Loftis, who is a from a family in the American South, commits suicide, and the novel starts with her funeral where the other members of the family are also present. Peyton's life rushing into her tragedy is revealed in the novel, which chronicles the efforts Peyton, Helen Loftis and Milton Loftis make to achieve the allure of personal identity in their chaotic world. Peyton's mother, Helen, is damned by her obsessive piety, and her father, Milton, is a fallen, middle class, aged alcoholic, who meditates over the absurdity of his life when he discovers that "his whole life had been in the nature of a hangover" (Styron, *Lie* 152), and his marriage has been a failure, too.

Living in this family Peyton starts her quest to establish personal order, but her search is always undercut by recurring threats of the vanity of her quest. Her longing for personal order is expressed by longing for a father-figure. The search for the father is absurd since Milton is unable to live up to Peyton's father-image, furthermore he cannot balance the mother's obsessional dominance. Milton "has hoped to transform a common mistress into a divine Beatrice, and drink into the ambrosia that preserves to the last the dregs of mortality, shields him against age, despair, loss, inadequacy, pain, impotence; the quester who has found life a depressing recurrence of half-open doors through which he followed a dream, hoping to open the final door and look upon a beautitude instead, as he does, of peering into the horror and nothingness" (Morris 4). The characters of the family are embodiments of each other's strivings for balance and meaning. They search for innate values in the others, and it takes quite

a while until they assume that these precious qualities do not and did not used to exist.

Peyton feels more than affection towards her father, who comforts her when she is hurt and their gestures and physical responses show that they are sexually attracted to each other. For example, after soothing Peyton in her grief Milton "drew her toward him, feeling her arm against his leg" (Styron, *Lie* 79). Peyton's love towards his father immerses into her subconscious. When Dick and Peyton talk about love her father occurs to her, "'Do you love me?' he said 'Mmm-m.' He stopped her in the middle of a dip, holding her close, their lips nearly touching... 'Do you love me?' he repeated intensely. She looked up, eyes wide with astonishment. 'There's Daddy'" (201).

After drinking too much Milton offers his ring to Peyton and he compares himself with Dick, "if that rich young scoundrel can give you the pin the least you can do is accept this small token of affection from a broken-down wreck like me" (221). After this scene Peyton confesses what she feels about her father, "The dear. I think we have got a Freudian attachment. The dear. He's such an ass. If it just hadn't been Mother he married" (224). Helen emasculated Milton because she wanted too much of him and he was unable to satisfy her needs.

Milton looked at Peyton as the aim of his desires, "Peyton's dress was drawn tightly against her hips... he saw Peyton, those solid curved hips trembling ever so faintly; he thought desperately, hopelessly, of something he could not admit to himself but did: of now being above—most animal and horrid, but loving—someone young and dear that he had loved... Yes, dear God, he thought (and he thought dear God what am I thinking) the flesh, too, tha wet hot flesh, straining like a beautiful, bloody savage" (258).

Peyton and Harry's relationship was also shadowed by Milton. Peyton remembers when Harry took her upstairs in Richmond, "I was home rocking upward in his arms, and then he laid me down on a strange bed, and I called out, 'Daddy, Daddy,' " (339). And, miracuously, Milton was actually in the room.

Perhaps Peyton's misuse of sex grows out of the lessons learned from her parents. Helen longs for a father, her father image is that of a puritan father-God and Milton does not fulfill her concept of a Redeemer because Milton uses sex as a revenge against Helen's

"moralistic self-righteousness and his adultery with Dolly is his rather banal rebellion against Helen's puritanism and castrating self-righteousness" (Ratner 599). The explanations about the characters relationships with each other sound very convincing, and it is so relieving to attach labels like Oedipal complex, sexual frustrations, misuse of sex and the like to their ties. These categories could be true, but I would not say that they must be true. Perhaps they just fulfill the characters' desire to classify things and phenomena, and to rationalize their struggles.

In Peyton's life the "clock" is an ambiguous symbol. It can stand for personal order, for regaining balance, it can represent something eternal in the world and something to cling to. Peyton buys a clock for Harry and herself. Here "clock" can be the possibility of happiness for Peyton and Harry. Peyton says, "I could hear the clock whirring against my ear, perfect and ordered and eternal" (Styron, *Lie* 324). She longs for a communion with the "clock", "In my clock Harry and I would be safe from flies forever" (325).

Peyton's clock can make itself manifest yhe achievement of the ideal condition in which you can be sure of everything, but certainty in everything kills the questioning attitude, because you will not ask any more questions. If THE answers and THE only acceptable answers are provided, the questions—and the questioners—are killed, and even those who just slightly dare to attempt to question something commit themselves to suffering.

The absurdity of the clock is that it can stand for harmony and balance but at the same time it can express the oppressive order of seemingly well-organized systems in Styron's concept. "Lenin said there was no God and Stalin said collectivization + elecrtification = Soviet power, all working like a clock, tick-tock" (323).

The clock image can have another noteworthy function in uniting what Milan Kundera calls the monsters of the soul on the one hand and the monsters of the outside world, that is history, on the other hand (Vajda 158). Kundera describes the shift of a human being's struggle from fighting against the monster of the soul to fighting against history. In Styron's novel this shift can be traced, the two are interrelated and cannot be isolated.

One aspect of the absurdity of the age lies in the individual's desire to achieve order in the 20th century, in which the chaos is initiated by human beings through their strivings to establish their order by eliminating those who do not fit, or do not want to fit. It can be the inherent implication of disorder hiding beneath the surface of order. For example, in the novel Mrs. La Farge speaks about the war in Poland, and the A-bomb is also mentioned in the novel, "Nagasaki, the man said and he spoke of mushrooms and Mr. Truman: there were atoms in the air everywhere, he said, and he explained, but I couldn't make much sense" (Styron, *Lie* 327).

Styron refers to the absurdity of disorder when he writes that wars and cataclysms may open up new procpects, "... to people so young there is nothing final in disaster, the disaster itself often opening up refreshing vistas of novelty, escape or freedom" (221). The descriptions of order, disorder and oppressive order express the problem of "differentiating between that sort of organization which procures and protects intelligible life, and that sort of mechanical 'order' which induces anaesthezia" (Tanner 144).

Being unable to bear the unbearable burden of the disintegrating world around her, Peyton approaches her tragedy. She listens to music and "the voice goes up and up tragically as a night without stars" (Styron, *Lie* 332). She wants to fly with the "birds". She wants to leave the earth and it is expressed in the recurring image of "birds". But these "birds" have no wings and these wingless birds represent the futility of Peyton's existence, "the birds came back and things shadowed over some—it seemed that a lot of light went away from the day" (326), "then the birds all rustled in the sand... incurious eyes and I lay down somewhere in the desert topography of my mind" (331), "they came so serenely across the darkening sand, my poor wingless ones" (333). Peyton realizes the meaninglessness of her life, "I saw the birds alive, apart from dreams" (334), "I couldn't think of anything again but becoming immoral, the birds came rustling around me" (340). She wants to regain the balance of her disturbed mind in the communion with "birds", in death, "Perhaps I shall rise at another time, though I lie down in darkness... Come then and fly... and so I see them go—oh, my Christ—one by one ascending my flightless birds through the suffocating night, toward Paradise" (368). Haunted by the

"birds", Peyton rises high into the unreal and immediately falls down to meet her tragedy, when she sees the vanity of the world and believes in the hope of Christian immortality.

All the absurdity of her family life and of the surrounding world culminate is Peyton's character, who is involved in absurd situations. After realizing the absurdity of her situation she as a modern character who tries to synthetize the elements of her existence, to find the center and to escape to the transcendental order (Hassan 268), is unable to rationalize the irrational universe and to struggle against it, finally, commits suicide. In his absurdist fiction Styron does not create distorted worlds as much as he perceives that the world is distorted (Hauck 11). He is a recorder of distortion and of those crippled characters whose lives end in tragedy.

To find a raison d'etre, the characters try to rationalize their struggles and failures, and in this process they make objects of themselves. While searching for meaning they escape to the past, or to psychoanalysis, or they create dream worlds based on the moral code of Christianity, or on the conventional value system of the nostalgic Old South, and they are unable to live up to their ideals. They do not always question these ideals and they cannot laugh. They tend to become agelaste characters (Vajda 126) not only the way they think and possess the clear and ultimate truth, but in the way that they are confirmed that the ultimate truth and ethos exist even if they are on the bad side.

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JUDIT ÁGNES KÁDÁR

'KLEENEX-VIEW' AND CULTURAL DEVALUATION: MERCHANDISE AS ONTOLOGY IN DON DELILLO'S *WHITE NOISE* (1985)

An exciting perspective of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* is the one indicated in the above title. My paper is to focus on three chapters of the novel, with special emphasis on the social concerns the text presents. DeLillo's interest in externals as an effect provoking problems can be seen as an attempt to write about society following the iconoclastic tradition of the American novel. He creates a multilevel text that explores the consciousness of today's American Everyman intellectual, his perception of reality and human reactions providing a pathway to the so-called 'hard-core' of contemporaria through the dimensions of psychology, philosophy, sociology, culture and language.

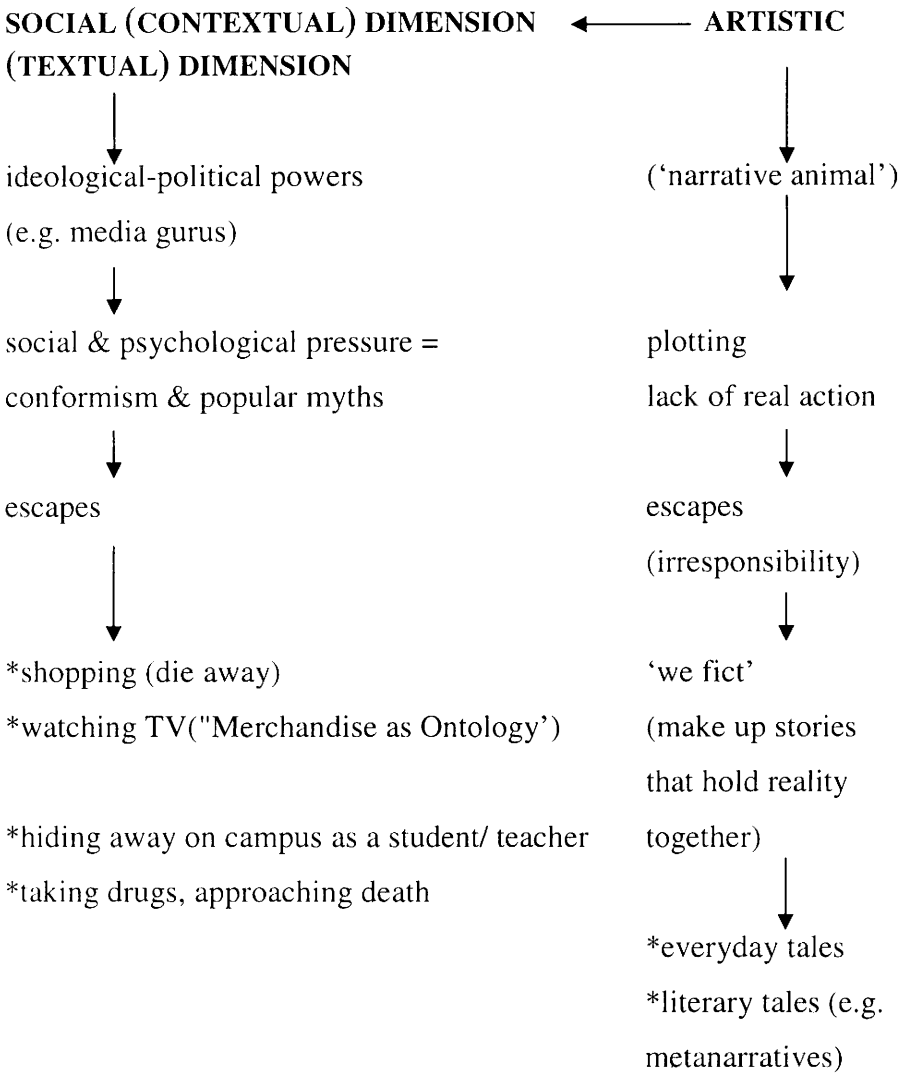
In many respects *White Noise* presents a blend of modernist and postmodernist tendencies. A major critic of DeLillo's texts, Frank Letricchia highlights the postmodernist features of the novel when investigating such notions as the loss of energy and values, the criticism of reason and technological modernization in Habermas's sense, and last but not least the codes and rituals or 'entropic dystopia'. However, some other characteristic features of the novel, such as the quest for understanding conceptualizing the deconstructive and chaotic world and the truly satirical voice, condition us to interpret it more readily in terms of modernism. This novel is a science fiction like vision, a distopia of contemporary culture, moreover the philosophical ideas the novel focuses on are of epistemological nature. The narrator, Jack Gladney seems to be aware

of the importance of creating stories ('plotting'), but narratology does not become his predominant concern throughout the novel. The selected section of the book can be taken as a thematic proposal to the novel as well as a complication after the descriptive, introductory narratives of the earlier chapters. Here the suspicion, that 'something has gone wrong' is foreshadowed; a comprehensive analysis of contemporary American society is envisaged, including some causal relations leading up to the state of fear and references to death, such as "A series of frightened children appeared at our door for their Halloween treats (*WN* 53)" at the end of Chapter 11. These three chapters are situated in the first part of the novel entitled "Waves and Radiation," in Lentricchia's description:

> "Waves and Radiation" is all about the white noise, actual and metaphoric, that constitutes the setting of postmodern life, an environment more or less in focus—less rather than more because not a direct object of perception like traditional novelistic and pre-modern environments, the city and the country. And the less in focus the environment, the more our paranoia is enhanced, not clinically but as a general (and reasonable) physic condition of privileged first world citizens. (Lentricchia: "Tales..." 100.)

The psychic condition of people is expressed in the complex symbolism of the toxic cloud, waves and radiation. The scientific description of the phenomenon called 'radiation fog' helps us understand the wide range of symbolic implications *White Noise* offers the reader: it is an immobile, cloud-like moisture that in clear nights hovers over wintertime valleys while the earth's warmth 'escapes into the upper atmosphere'. The chapters I have chosen for analysis present a world in which people's minds are covered with this 'fog' in everyday terms.

The following chart presents a summary of the negative (entropic, deconstructive and devaluing) tendencies that seem to work behind the text and formulate the fundamental concepts it is built upon.



The selected chapters include such locations as the school, the supermarket, College-on-the-Hill, the family home (especially the kitchen), the bank and Murray's place. These intentionally generic locations, together with characters of similarly generic nature, point out an interesting feature of DeLillo's writing and approach to literature. His ethical preoccupation attacking the American lifestyle is embedded in a text. The main point is to make people recognize: 'you

live in the same way and let your mind get full of junk data (e.g. the supermarket and the TV) and false dreams; open your eyes and see you live on the surface and are getting alienated from the hardcore of life.' Probably this intention moves the writer away from the traditional novel-concept where the characters and contents are deprived of their everyday nature. Actually DeLillo's writing seems to be the opposite of that trend in fiction. I think that the notion 'we fict' gets overwhelming emphasis in the latter through the preoccupation with philosophical ideas in the form of the novel.

DeLillo's textual reality and its philosophical, social and psychological dimensions are presented directly in the content and characters like Murray or Heinrich. They speak out their views sometimes in an extremely strict and explanatory, 'philosophizing' way, for instance in Murray's talk to Babette in the supermarket (Chapter 9); the dialogue between Jack and Heinrich about 'truth' (Chapter 10) or in the case of Jack's interest in the culture of death (e.g. his Hitler Studies) throughout the book and in the course of these three chapters in the death of culture, inflation and disarray of values. Murray plays a special role, his presence reminded me of the Lucifer figure in a famous Hungarian drama: *The Tragedy of Man* (1861) by Imre Madách. Jack (Ádám) and Babette (Éva) experience different things while Murray (Lucifer) keeps on explaining the evil nature of mankind with irony and sometimes sarcasm, for instance: " 'The more you talk, the sneakier you look, as if you're trying to put something over on us' [says Jack. Murray's reply is:] 'The best talk is seductive' (*WN* 51)." A panoramic view of their existence is presented here, providing a philosophical perspective that makes them reevaluate themselves and their approach to reality.

Another interesting parallel is also noticeable here: Babette's figure seems to follow the path that other American writers, like Edward Albee, established with female characters such as Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?* and some other female characters of the less well-known plays entitled "The American Dream" or "The Sandbox". The social concern and the writer's approach to the society in which he lives show similarities, too, in many stances. The institution of marriage, for instance, is treated as a satire of conformism here, though its 1980s' concept lacks the outsider's superior view and

presents the spouses not as much as social beings, but rather in their psychological nature.

Since morality and fantasy are of primary interest in the novel, comic qualities are especially emphasized. The tone of DeLillo's text is full of different types of humor, especially Black Humor and satire. However, neither one achieves absolute dominance. In his critical view of society he uses satire as a weapon, though he is aware of the fact that since no one is in the position any longer to judge without self-criticism, superiority disappears and the narrator can merely wander around the settings without any certainty to find a hierarchy of values. This feature would move the general tone from satire towards Black Humor; certain elements point in this direction, for instance the nihilistic black games such as Heinrich's chess party with the serial killer and the murder-case itself; the games with death such as Babette's drug-taking habits or Jack's choice of profession as a researcher of Hitler Studies; the stress on social absurdities such as people's disability and unwillingness to realize the impact of the media on them. Using Abádi-Nagy's distinction (*Válság*... 386–97), DeLillo's novel shows comic, 'Black Humorous' qualities in the

- physical sphere (i.e. the strong concern with death and apocalyptic environmental pollution, fear and uncertainty);
- ethical sphere (i.e. the writer's aim to shock and estrange from the absurdities of life lack superior and/or outsider position);
- mental sphere (the superficial qualities become overemphasized with the loss of real values and causality, though the need of a firm center, a hardcore, still lives).

As Robert Scholes claims regarding the symbolic function of snow in Donald Barthelme's *City Life*: "This snow-like fallout of brain damage is not just a reminder of the pollution of our physical atmosphere, it is the crust of phenomenal existence which has covered our mental landscape, cutting us off from the essence of our being, afflicting even the atoms (Scholes 116–7)."

A closer examination of the text reveals the signs of the approaching apocalyptic situation and references to the true nature of the phenomenon. The cloud threatening Blacksmith and its people probably denotes not just surface dangers like the ones caused by problems with a machine, the food, fumes or toxic materials, but it

also refers to "something deeper, finer-grained, more closely woven into the basic state of things (*WN* 35);" so to speak the firm center of their lives, too. Words like 'irritation' or 'mask' and events like the teachers' brain confusion and the investigators' enlisted uncertainty-factors suggest the suspicion that some really big trouble is to come. The pollution of the environment-, language- and mind theme forms a complex thematic unit here.

After this introductory paragraph we are again with the Gladneys and Murray Siskind at the Supermarket, an archetypal image, a 'sacrificial temple' of our age. At this image we have to stop for a moment and see what SUPERMARKET embodies and represents. An analyst of the "Mechanization and Standardization in America" (Müller-Freienfels 272–9) differentiated between European and American lifestyles. He claims that while the Old World culture focuses on the organic, artistic and intellectual aspects, Americans are much more concerned about the magnitude in values, the machine-made world, and technique is not a means only but also a purpose for them. While Europeans are interested in distance, uniqueness and originality, their New World fellows deal mainly with type, similarity and agreement in all dimensions of life (274). This quoted distinction lies at the roots of American pragmatic thinking and behavior and get symbolized in the term 'Supermarket Culture'. DeLillo stresses the spiritual surrender of the 'sensus communis' to these ideas and Supermarket stands for them: "We moved together into the ultra-cool interior (*WN* 35);" the sliding door that keeps energy in and after the last purchase point where "breath mints and nasal inhalers" are sold, people get out of the womb-like (spiritual) 'incubator' that prepares them for death, having been consumed by the system in which they are to purchase happiness by the act of shopping, obtaining material goods; finally they are at the parking lot, another typical symbol of their lifestyle.

I think the KITCHEN is another important location of the Gladneys' life since it is a center of information exchange in the family and between the family and the outside world. The telephone is located here and "a computer-generated voice is asking a marketing survey aimed at determining current levels of consumer desire (48)," implying the strong interdependence of information and consumer

society. The family members hear the news about the toxic cloud from the radio there in the kitchen, too, and decide what to believe and how to react. The dinner table is the place where they talk to the kids and discuss family matters as well, presenting a confusion of the private and the social spheres.

The switch from the kitchen-setting to Murray's home is quick: here we find a room which is 'a container of thought' next to an insane asylum, which is expected to give strange noises... Murray is engaged in his communication theory referred to above.

Both the supermarket and the suburban kitchen scene stand for the notion of conformism. I believe that the original idea of conformism apparently got loaded with negative connotations. Texts like DeLillo's writing criticize manipulation strategies in a satirical voice and focus on standardized man ('massive nothing'); the standardized environment ('suburbia'); or routine activities (senseless and emptied-out social reflexes, e.g. when Babette reads, because the old fellow needs his 'weekly dose of culture myths'). "We moved into the generic food area... (36)" says our narrator-guide and starts his list of language and culture trash: bins, filmy bags, machines, nameless systems, roars and cries, altogether WHITE NOISE in Supermarket-terms stressing the superficial order of all things around them, the chaos and unnaturalness as dehumanizing forces. Here 'merchandise as ontology' is explained through the idea: "Here we don't die, we shop (36)." Then a superficial dialogue follows that leaves us in suspicious again: Baba is discovered to use a drug that has side-effects. From this point we can't help searching for underlying reasons for that and it enables the reader 'to see double': to see the causes and effects together. We learn that all the family members have some kind of escapist redirection activity as a defense against outside forces, for instance Baba taking drugs; the ex-wife at the ashram; Denise and the green visor which offers her "wholeness and identity (7);" Heinrich and the chess party; Jack wearing a black gown on campus; and even Wilder, the defenseless innocent little kid, who cries for hours. These self-defense strategies provide them with a 'Kleenex-view' of the world similarly to the paperback books on the shelves of the supermarket that suggest made-up stories about cult mysteries and heroes. The end of the novel underlines this idea: "The tales of the

supernatural and the extra-terrestrial. The miracle vitamins, the cures for cancer, the remedies for obesity. The cults of the famous and the dead (326)."

The supermarket in Murray's presentation becomes a temple where sacrificial rituals happen thousands of times every day. The text here gets loaded with philosophical allusions (e.g. the Tibetan spiritual parallel) and conclusions like: "Here we don't die, we shop. But the difference is less marked than you think (38)." This place is like an Egyptian pyramid, where we get a still-framed perception in a 'sealed-off' and 'self-contained' location of death. The notion that these people die as they lived is implied here: they seem to live in complete facelessness and loneliness, being exclusively concerned about everyday banalities. Again, Wilder and another kid, the Asian baby both counterpoint the adults' guilt with their innocence. In my view, throughout the whole chapter Murray tries to get Jack and Babette to visit him at his place and the spouses are powerless and seem to get under his polite controlling intentions. Jack's mental uncertainty and gradual loss of direction is underlined by the returning motif of the inability to comprehend people talking strange languages around him, just like at the beginning of this chapter.

Between the Kleenex-view described in the supermarket-section and the Kleenex-view offered by the TV in Chapter 11, the previous chapter forms a thematic link situated mostly in the family home. Chapter 10 starts as if we are given a poster or advertisement about College-on-the-Hill, and then we can look behind and see, what in fact students get for their fourteen thousand dollars: another 'incubator', where they ('in fetal position'!) are hermetically closed up for secret 'overfinement' purposes. Overfinement refers here to the extremely specific education that enables them to speak a professional jargon, an incomprehensible language for Jack. Again the Babel-image appears and shows Jack as an estranged observer of the students and their bell-jar covered inbreeding place, a further reference to Sylvia Plath's notion of *The Bell Jar*. Paradoxically teachers like Jack teach these languages to them. However, he is unable to advance in his German, the meta-language of his own field, i.e. Hitler Studies... On the other hand, they get overfined during their college years in the sense that their mind and interests focus on academic fields and they lose touch

with everyday reality. Jack and Murray spend most of their time on campus, too. Marshall McLuhan, Father of Media Theory and author of such books as *The Guttenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding Media*, himself a myth-maker and mythical figure as well, says in an interview:

> – 'But', the voice perished, 'you've only lived your whole life on a university campus.'
> – 'Well', McLuhan responded, 'if you've lived on a university campus, you know a lot about stupidity. You don't have to go outside the university to understand the human condition.'
> – There was laughter.
> – 'You can't always recognize stupidity at first sight—he continued.—Or immaturity. Very few people go past the mental age of eleven now. It isn't safe! Why—they would be alienated from the rest of the world.' (Powe 23)

Campus-life and education often trains people for cultural conformity, though the idea to follow the 'establishment' is sometimes rejected by the same intellectuals. According to an influential, though conservative view of the anti-establishment intellectuals in a book entitled *The New American Society* "Opinion-making institutions can present and diffuse ideologies that justify the dominance of bureaucratic elite and can withhold information that conceals incompetence, malfeasance and self-serving (Bensman–Vidich 285)." At another place in the same book conformity and one-dimensionality, a fundamental notion of Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* is ideologically turned out of its original meaning, when discussing the pre-manufactured experience provided by the mass media and intellectuals turning against it: "The failure of consciousness means simply that individuals fail to recognize the amount of freedom that is available if they would choose to use it (279)." The above quoted views serve as counter-examples that refer to Jack's involvement in the battle of ideologies, makes efforts to see clearly, but he cannot get out of the context of his own life, cannot revolt in a heroic way: he simply goes on searching for possible escapes.

After the two images of social and spiritual incubation, i.e. the Supermarket and the Campus, the themes of consumer society and contamination merge, when Babette argues why she needs her daily

dose of cult mystery and escape: in her simplifying mind there always must be either-or choices, for instance to take or not to take a chewing gum or a cigarette; either she dies first or Jack... Her reactions again remind us of Albee's Martha when she says: "I'm not a criminal,... All I want to do is chew a pathetic little tasteless chunk of gum now and then (*WN* 42)." Martha behaves similarly in tense situations. I think such seemingly irrelevant questions as the fuss about whether to chew or not to chew gum is given some relevance. Through Babette's reactions one can learn about the psychology of this culture and its impact on the individual. Babette is like a perfectly programmed robot, a product of consumer society being absolutely dependent on her environment, one who has lost her own will-power and is on the way of losing self-control, too: "Look, either I chew gum or I smoke. If you want me to start smoking again, take away my chewing gum and my Mentho-Lyptus (42)." Others always instruct her what to do and what not to do. She reads the warnings on the chewing gum or cigarette packet; she waits for the media to tell her whether there is danger of a toxic cloud or not; Mink gets her to take Dylar and what not... She is a robot in the sense that she mechanically does routine activities, for example "transcribing names and phone numbers from an old book to a new one (45);" shopping, teaching motion-patterns, getting the family to watch TV always at the same time and reading to an elderly man just as she reads bedtime pornographic stories as a substitute for a real sexual relationship with Jack). Her figure seems to be similar to "a race of people with a seven-bit analog consciousness (41)." Facelessness is also emphasized at the end of this chapter: Jack checks his balance (!) at the bank, his account is OK, so the system has "blessed his life (46)," approved his existence. In other words, if others say so, then he exists. A similar ironical identifying relevance is given to the 'automated banking card' at the end of Chapter 37: "REMEMBER. You cannot access your account unless your code is entered properly. Know your code. Reveal your code to no one. Only your code allows you to enter the system (295)."

In the course of shifting the narration from a family scene with Babette to another one with Heinrich, Jack disappears. He is present only as a medium of narration, he transfers and radiates his view to the reader. The episodes with Heinrich reveal epistemological questions.

He is the orator of 'the many truth theory' and a voice of pessimistic relativity (skepticism). He dwells on the border of skepticism and nihilism, since he plays a GAME of chess with a murderer, a game of movements without personal communication. Here the Babel-allusion reaches one of its peaks: the paradox of language and game, or language as a game in a philosophical sense. It is facelessness in another form. A further example of social psychology is given here: a figure similar to the characters in the novels of Truman Capote and Franz Kafka follows a call and kills people without any specific reason. But similarly to Capote's way of investigating the motives of his murderers in the book entitled *In Cold Blood*, Heinrich lets us know the psychological drives behind their deeds claiming that the prisoner has heard 'pressuring voices' coming from the TV.

A movie entitled *Knight Moves* presents murder-instinct in a similar way, too. I think chess, an organized system of rules that are based on causal relations, is the counter-symbol of the seemingly senseless murder-case lacking causality. Probably that is why they chose to play it. Moreover, on Heinrich's side it provides him with a sense of order as opposed to the chaotic nature of the surrounding world. Heinrich's reasoning seems to me a bit too philosophical for a teenager. Nevertheless, it is not the only example in the novel, where children present more wisdom than their parents. Denise gets superior to, or at least morally stronger than Babette in the beginning of the chapter, too. The way adults seem to formulate their perceptions into concepts about the reality that surrounds them seems to be significantly manipulated and many times helplessly confused.

Without noticing it we are introduced to the other supplier of physical data and mass consciousness: the TV. The manipulation strategies mentioned earlier in the supermarket-section work also through mass media, where one cannot get reality but only its screened vision. Referring back to the above chart one can see that among the possible escapes TV, i.e. watching stories happening always to others, believing all and sometimes mixing it up with reality, seems to be the everyday devaluing counterpart of the notion 'we fict'. Today more and more people are aware of the negative, controlling power of the media: still we keep watching and listening to them. DeLillo provides an explanation in the novel: "Media is a

primal force in American home. Sealed-off, timeless, self-contained and self-referring, similarly to the supermarket image. It's like a myth being born right there in our living room... (*WN* 51)." For a lot of people TV means too much: actually, sometimes I am amazed how much a lot of people are attached and glued to the 'metaphysical God' in my own surroundings as well. Again taking McLuhan's opinion, which also deals with waves and radiation: "At the speed of light there are no moving parts. At the speed of light you don't have a body. On the telephone, on TV, on the radio, you are discarnate. This is the age of discarnate man. And without a body you can't be human. You can be God or devil, but you can't be human (Powe 24)." Jack gives his own view in the next chapter (Chapter 11) saying:

> The boy [Eugene in Australia] is growing up without television, which may make him worth talking to, Murray, as a sort of wild child, a savage plucked from the bush, intelligent and literate but deprived of the deeper codes and messages that mark his species as unique.
> And Murray's reply is:
> TV is a problem only if you've forgotten how to look and listen. ...Root out content. Find the codes and messages, to use your phrase, Jack. (50)
> He adds later on:
> You have to open yourself to the data. TV offers incredible numbers of physic data... [The real thing TV provides us is] coded messages and endless repetitions, like chants, like mantras. ...sacred formulas (51).

Jack and Murray represent two close, but not identical views: both recognize the extraordinary importance of myths and codes, easy to notice and understand signs for the sensus communis. However, Jack considers the media as a purpose, too. A similar paradox appears here as the one I referred to earlier in the contrast of European and American cultures. The two 'sites of experience,' using Eugene Goodheart's term (26), emphatic carriers and producers of myth, in chapters 9, 10 and 11 are the Supermarket and TV: anyway one can find many other contemporary mythical subjects in the rest of the book, too, such as Elvis, cars, Anglo-conformity, suburbia or the campus.

To understand DeLillo's ideas concerning the role of media, one must know that he is a media-expert himself and seems to be perfectly familiar with the relationship of media, popular culture and literature,

where the keyword is MYTH. In his essay John Vickery quotes Ernst Cassirer when defining myth as:

> ...a mode of consciousness that symbolically structures the world and a record of the mind's processes projected onto the external world. Its symbolizing activity, therefore, contributes to the human creation of a meaningful and so called objective world. By so objectifying human emotions in image and symbol, myth serves the socially pragmatic function of generating a shared feeling and conviction of social and natural unity. (Vickery 79)

Zsolt Virágos explains in his essay why and how this originally positive, "ideologically attuned myth-making (30)" changes the 'generation of shared feelings' into something dangerous. DeLillo applied a similar theme in his *Libra*, where the metanarrative nature of media is in focus, and there is a further example: the ongoing 'live' metanarrative process concerning the O. J. Simpson case each day on CNN and in other media in 1995 or the constantly enriching metanarrative coverage of 9.11, the terrorist attack against the World Trade Center in New York and its aftermath.

The quest for a firm center is lost and substituted by beliefs in different myths, like clichés, political religion, technology, myth of the apocalypse and the myth of New World innocence, in Virágos's terms; such metaphors as John Winthrop's 350 year old idea of 'a city-upon-a-hill', the myth DeLillo directly refers to in the text when mentioning the 'College-on-the-Hill.' To some extent, *White Noise* gives the criticism of the monomyth-seeking conformism, the 'mainframe' as DeLillo calls it (*WN* 46) ,that is presented in popular culture reinforcing 'core values.' Iris Murdoch claims that the problem is the "over-willingness to depend upon 'myth' (Kermode 123)." The novel also deals with the period of uncertainty, when 'competitive myths' appear. Probably the reason why DeLillo's *White Noise,* and in particular the chapters analyzed here, focus on contemporary Americans' attachment to popular culture myths is the recognition that:

> 1. after many classical and avant-garde attempts in arts, people want something that is understandable for everyone ('sensus communis'), taken to extremities in the novel: they need a kind of 'Kleenex-view' provided by the Supermarket Values of TV culture, a defense safety-

net against reality, plus something that presents patterns for them to follow;
2. from the viewpoint of the 'establishment', powerful cliques controlling the masses with the help of media, popular arts serve the present existing system and provide a tranquilizer and artificially generated pleasures ('kitsch') smoothing away aggression of man-in-the-street. Its mechanism is presented especially in the dialogues between Jack and Murray, for example in Chapter 11 when Murray compares the unifying, controlling and estranging power of ads and mass-producers of culture on kids and adults (*WN* 48).

A Hungarian philosopher, Miklós Almási gives the deep understanding of this question (14, 97) and I think his ideas could help us realize more of the social background of the text. He also mentions an interesting phenomenon, which has something to do with the title of the novel and its first part, moreover the theme of Chapters 9, 10 and 11, namely that according to media-sociologists, since there are many channels to choose from on TV, yet people get almost the same watching any of them, people watch TV less attentively, while the media becomes the source of background noise, i.e. WHITE NOISE. He concludes that it is not an absolutely negative feature of modern life, since arts and media can serve purposes like relaxation as well. Goodheart agrees on this claiming in his essay entitled "Don DeLillo and the Cinematic Kitsch" that cinematic kitsch may even provide us with a necessary mode of relaxation in a life governed by anxieties and fears. The real danger perhaps lies in the tendency of kitsch to overtake everything, to consume all our experiences (126).

I think that the writer calls attention to these dangers, too. His suspicion concerning "the networks, the circuits, the streams, the harmonies (*WN* 46)," the system altogether and the individual's necessary self-defense described ironically at the end of Chapter 10 (*WN* 46) comes from the idea, that to feel safe and comfortable in present society, one has to give in to the system including identity and independence as well, and become a number (just like in Jack Richardson's drama entitled "Gallows Humour" the despised idea of becoming a 'number-patch'). Jean-Fracois Lyotard connects the ownership and control of information with the relationship between state and society, also mentioning noise as a phrase for chaos:

> The idea that the state as a 'brain' or 'mind' of society owns knowledge, gets more and more out of date in the same degree, as the counter-idea, which says that society can live and develop only if messages flooding in it are rich in information and can be decoded easily, gets stronger and stronger. The ideology of transparency of information, which walks hand-in-hand with commercialization of knowledge, begins to consider the state as a factor causing obscurity and noise (Lyotard 17, translation mine).

I believe that Jack is aware of this tendency, although his surface actions (what we actually learn from the text) show him to be a perfect agent of conformism (e.g. his job at the college, or his words at the bank). The irony of his voice (e.g. on page 46) and the narrative technique proves the opposite: Chapter 10 ends in the 'perfect harmony of the soul' when he is accepted by the system, i.e. the bank-account balance is confirmed, nevertheless, Chapter 11 starts with the sentences: "I woke up in the grip of a death sweat. Defenseless against my own racking fears (*WN* 47)." The recognition is followed by interior fear and quest for a hardcore, a center. The 'good old' routine actions and reactions in the exterior are here now: "to talk seriously to a child" in the kitchen, "where the levels of data are numerous and deep (48)" (see also in Richardson's drama the symbolic kitchen-scene).

On the way home from Murray's place, they pass along the window of an optical shop and read again brand names. Here the 'Kleenex-view' theme is reinforced, see also Denise's green visor and many other references earlier: the view of things is in question now. Murray says previously that the 'hows' of watching TV and the world are important (see also *WN* 50). Babette has always got trouble with seeing clearly and now her perception of the world becomes even more confused. She forgets all the details of everyday life, moreover, this seems to be a general tendency, since forgetfulness is in the air... 'Brainwash' is an unmentioned word hanging in the air, but references like drugs reinforce its hidden existence. Babette is a pliable subject to be influenced and controlled, the most terrifying thing about her is that though 'either-or life' mentioned earlier can be boring, she claims: "I hope it lasts forever (53)." Her last sentence means the opposite of what we saw at the end of the previous chapter in Jack's behavior: she passively and powerlessly falls into a unconscious state, a vegetation

of mind, where the inputs of the surroundings directly determine the effects on her actions and choices; she totally gives up her identity and personality, getting diffused in 'The Toxic Labyrinth' (referring to Myrna Millar's book title).

One thing the reader of DeLillo's *White Noise* surely wishes to do is to avoid the 'toxic labyrinth', and perhaps to obtain an approach to reality which is radically different from a 'Kleenex view'.

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JUDIT MOLNÁR

THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL DIMENSION OF DIASPORIC DISCOURSE FROM THE CARREBIAN ON THE CANADIAN LITERARY SCENE

By way of preamble to this article, I would like to emphasize the fact that the following is going to be case studies of selected works by two authors: *Austin C. Clarke* and *Dionne Brand*, who can trace back their roots to the Carribean in their idiosyncratic ways. The close reading of the texts will basically rely on the concepts put forward by Yi-Fu Tuan *Space and Place* (1977) and *The Production of Space* (1974) by Henri Lefebvre. I do not intend to problematize the notions of space and place in this paper but theoretical clarifications are in order. I shall apply the notion verbalized by Yi-Fy Tuan according to whom: "'Space' is more abstract than 'place'. What begins as undiferrentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (6). Henri Lefebvre notes, "We are thus confronted by an indefinite multitude of spaces, each one piled upon, or perhaps contained within, the next: geographical, economic, demographic, sociological, ecological, political, commercial, national, continental, global. Not to mention nature's (physical) space, the space of (energy) flows, and so on" (6) Let me also add the space of religion and that of language as well. Spatial references of differents sorts will be pointed out in the texts.

Since the authors under discussion are not necessarily known some words about their backgrounds are going to be made. Cyril Dabydeen, himself a poet from the Caribbeans, writes of Clarke, "[t]he Carribean literary groundwork has been laid in the seminal work of the Barbadian-born novelist: Austin Clarke; his place in Canadian

literature is well-established" (10) Austin C. Clarke has become "[C]anada's first major black writer" (Algoo–Baksh 1994). His whole life continues to move back and forth between his Caribbean heritage and his Canadian affiliations. Duality has been at the core of his existence and doubleness continues to characterize his literary output, too. His contribution both to Canadian and Caribbean literatures is of real significance. Not only does he belong to these two bodies of literatures but he also belongs to these two countries in his different missions. He immigrated to Canada in 1955, when a huge flux of immigration started from the Caribbeans, but became a Canadian citizen only in 1981. He ran for election as a candidate for the Progressive Conservative Party in the Ontario government in 1977. He was an adviser to a Barbadian prime minister, was cultural attache to the Barbadian Embassy in Washington, and was on the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada as well. He says in an interview with Linda Hutcheon:

> That is not to say that, now that I am a Canadian citizen, I am not Barbadian, because I am Barbadian by nature—the best of me is Barbadian; the best of my memories are Barbadian. But when I look at my presence in this country, the problems of duality arise each time there is a threat to my stability, each time there is a slur on a whole group of persons with whom I could easily identify, each time there is a slur on a larger group of persons with whom I politically have to identify. (69)

He has written several novels and a large number of short stories. In order to be able to find an explanation for his dual alliances, I have chosen to discuss his memoir *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* (1980), which provides the reader with the colonial roots of Clarke's development as a writer and as an individual. It is a narrative of transformation. Algoo–Baksh (166) considers the novel together with *The Prime Minister* (1978) and *Proud Empires* (1988) to form a trilogy in which "the works encompass the experience of essentially one protagonist who is the product of a colonial heritage" (166).

Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack is at one level about Clarke's formative years in his childhood and adolescence, and on another level it describes the colonial society of Barbados in the 1930s and in the 1940s together with its relation to the outside world. It is the adult Clarke, who looks back on these years in his life in the process of

revealing essential dichotomies he was brought up amongst and which have deeply penetrated his psyche.

The novel's basic theme is education. The very school and the church have become the *places* to describe the colonial *space*. I shall eleborate on these *places*, the way they form a *space*. It is only through "proper" education that one could move up in the caste-ridden society of Barbados, based on class and race. Clarke happily compiled with his mother's wish; "Go 'long, boy and *learn*! Learning going make you into a man." (5) His mother did not want him to miss out on what she could never have hence her wholehearted support. In the discursive narrative, built on association rather than chronology, we move in and out of different educational institutions primarily schools and the church. The British school-system that was imported to Barbados and the Anglican Church have had long-lasting effects on Clarke. After primary school where flogging was in the centre of teaching, Clarke happily immersed himself in Western culture avidly reading Keats, Byron, Shelley, Dickens, the classics, studying Latin, French and becoming familiar with British history. Years later he clearly saw the one-sidedness of the knowledge acquired in Barbados.

> I *knew* all about the Kings; the Tudors, Stuarts and Plantagenets; and the Wars of the Roses; but nothing was
> taught about Barbados. We lived in Barbados, but we studied English society and manners. (72)

Clarke's devotion to the literary history of Britain became stronger and stronger. He lived through the important events in the history of the Empire.

> I was not a "History Fool": I just loved and cherished my past in the *History of England* book. I did not use it as a stepping stone to the Civil Service or the Department of Sanitary Inspection. I decided instead to live it, to make it a part of me. (73)

The boys' brains were filtered with the idea that everything English-made was superior. To acquire knowledge was important because it led the way to possess wealth coming from outside into the country: "We were the English of Little England. Little black Englishmen." (52) So, they tried to imitate English accents, but ironically enough:

> We could not know, because the vast Atlantic which separated us from England, that the speech we were imitating was really working-class London fish-sellers' speech. We, the black aristocracy of an unfree society, exchanged our native speech for English working-class patois. (52–53)

Knowledge of the Western world was available only for the privileged who could afford it; many with the support of relatives from America. The educated boy's image conjured up the word "fool".

> Any black boy who achieved brilliance at book learning, who got a job that no one remembered ever being held by a black boy, such a boy was said to be "bright-bright-bright". He was either a "Latin Fool," or a "mathematics fool," or a "Science fool." He was also said to be slightly mad. "Off his head." (69)

As Brown points out the word "fool": [in] the Creole usage ... implies an awesome expertise. [...] it also voices the colonial's deference to the colonizer's culture" (15). The application of the ambiguous meaning of the word serves also as an example for the binary cultural oppositions embedded in Clarke's early experiences.

Clarke was not only a "history fool" but a "dreaming fool" (137), too, and Milton has always been dear to him, which accidentally happens to be the name of his best friend in the novel, too. Clarke is thoroughly familiar with Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, thus Brown sees a connection in Clarke's wish to explode the two myths; one associated with the Caribbeans as Paradise and the other with the New World as El Dorado. (191) He clearly demonstrates the falseness of these believes. Brown argues:

> Nothing has more forcefully emphasized the fallacy of a Caribbean Paradise than the islander's stubborn quest for their economic and social El Dorado: in the Panama Canal Zone at the turn of the century; Great Britain after the Second World War; the United States over the last forty years; and Canada since the fifties. (2)

And the image of a possible El Dorado in the New World often vanishes when immigrants face the harsh reality of the society where they have hoped to fulfil their dreams and instead find themselves culturally, socially, politically suppressed.

Clarke's early education unhidden in the novel originated not only in the St. Matthias school and the Combermere Secondary School. Closely

related is the instruction provided by the Anglican Church. They intensely studied the Scriptures, prayed from the Book of Common Prayers, and he sang enthusiastically in the church choir, too. The local church always "too loud" (84) was for other people.

> In the same way that schools and people and fools were categorized, so too was the Church of the Nazarane. It was slotted at the lower end of the religious ladder. Only poor people, people who had suffered, who had the hardest of lives, who were black in a population of black people, only these worshipped at the Church of the Nazarene. (110)

Yet Clarke acknowledges, "But it was a part of the village; and if I could have thought about it in those days of no serious social thought and awareness, it was a part of ourselves." (110) And in-between there was the AME church for middle-class people. The society of Barbados was very fragmented in all areas of life. The *genius loci,* that is the distinctive atmosphere and the particular character of this place is manifest in different ways that create a unique space with its linguistic and religious characteristics as well.

Religious holidays like Christmas were celebrated in a special way. It was a time for feasting, getting the artificial snow and for women to gather and tell anecdotes. The oral tradition of handing down stories and communicating in general was very strong:

"We never wrote a local letter: we would walk with that meage, or give it verbally to a friend, to give to a friend, to give to the person. I never could understand why." (37)

The novel depicts the way the local culture lives side by side with the imported culture of the colonizers in a cross-cultural space. The dominating culture of the colonizers controlled over everything in every possible way. Being able to get rid of the school uniform during the summer symbolizes a kind of freedom that could not be experienced otherwise. Algoo-Baksh notes, "[t]he book is a source of insight into the absurdities and contradictions of a colonial legacy that was responsible for making cultural schizoids of Clarke and his fellow colonized" (147). Being an illegitimate child in a matriarchal society was not something to be ashamed of but the dominant culture stigmatized it. Having no legal father, Clarke had to live through embarrassing episodes at school. At the same time, it is with warmth that Clarke talks about his mother and stepfather. The autobiographical impulses are very strong in the novel.

The attractive interpersonal space helps him to cope. He appreciates his mother's and stepfather's endeavours to move up the social ladder. They move up in the physical sense of the word, too: "We moving up the hill, Flagstaff Hill" (54). The road was named after the flag staff on which the Union Jack was raised each morning. (65) The fractured society inhabited easily distinguishable locations in the dwelling: Belleville packed with the rich and Carrington Village with the extremely poor.

Growing up has happened in an idiosyncratic way for Clarke. It is only with mixed feelings that he remembers his sexual initiation into manhood, but his mental growth provided him with pleasure and it saw no limits:

> Every other boy at Combermere wanted to be a barrister-at-law. It seemed as if it was the only profession open to us. And it meant going *up* to England. Nothing could be better than seeing the Mother Country with your own eyes. (172)

Thus Brown rightly observes:

> [...] *Growing Up Stupid* is as much about emigration as it is about Barbados *per se*. Poverty and colonialism are forms of social dispossession, amounting to a kind of local exile. Emigration, real or imaginary, is a logical extension of that sense of exile. (13)

In the novel it is England that seems to be the best country to go to. America is depicted both with admiration and despise. Canada in the 1940s loomed only at a very large distance and as something unknown: "Canada was not talked about ... It was a blur on our consciousness." (31) There was a strong disire to move from one cultural zone/space to another.

The numerous episodes unfold in a blend of different languages in the course of the novel. Standard English and the language of native Barbadians nicely mix. By the end of the novel we almost hear the local dialect:

> Day in and day out I working my fingers to the bone in that blasted Marine, and I can't see myself getting nowhere or it. It's slavery. Tomorrow is Monday, however, and the tourisses leffing. They going back up to Englund and Amurca. (36)

The multicoloured nature of the text is enhanced by the insertion of songs, hymns, proverbs, letters and tales.

Brown notes that in Clarke's works the satiric contempt for corruption combines with "an insistence on the creative possibilities of life itself" (186). At the end of the novel, before entering Harrison College Clarke remembers: "I knew then that the time had come for me to dream of a new beginning." (192) Growing up "stupid" under the Union Jack did not prevent Clarke from going on and finding new possibilities for developing himself. Gaston Bachelard's comment holds true for Clarke, "Spaces remain in our memories and become creative" (10).

There is a generational distance but not a literary discontinuity between Austin Clarke and Dionne Brand. Belonging to the African diaspora Brand was born in Trinidad, and left for Toronto in 1970, where she studied English and philosophy. She has become known as a poet, fiction writer, university lecturer, oral historian, filmmaker, and also as social activist supporting black and feminist/lesbian communities. It is in the authentic black experience that most interest lies in Brand's works. In an interview with Linda Hutcheon she says, "Basically, I really didn't think of myself as an immigrant *per se*. ... I knew that the problems that I would have would not stem from my being an immigrant, but would stem from being black." (272)

It is not only Clarke that Brand has often been compared to but also Neil Bissoondath but for different reasons. Bissoondath's endeavours are realized in universalizing human experience. In contrast Brand claims to Hucheon, "I am wary of appeals to universality. ... I write about what is specific" (272–3). When she talks about her place on the Canadian literary scene and the dialectics of her identity she says in the interview mentioned above:

> Yes. I've heard other writers talk about being on the margins of Canadian writing. *I find myself in the middle of black writing*. I'm in in the centre of black writing, and those are the sensibilities that I check to figure out something that's truthful. I write out of a literaure, a genre, a tradition, and that tradition is the tradition of *black writing*. And whether that writing comes from the United States as African American writing or African Carribean writing or African writing from the continent, it's in that tradition that I work. I grew up under a colonial system of education, where I read English literature, and I liked it because I love words. But within that writing, there was never *my* presence. I was *absent* from that writing. (273) (emphasis added)

I have chosen an intreguing collection of short stories *Sans Souci* (1988) to concentrate on out of her many works. What connects the ten stories in this volume is the portrayal of the genuine black immigrant experience which is the recurring theme textured in excitingly varied subject matters. This particular experience is not individualized, however, but can be rather interpreted as a collective experience. The stories nicely pieced together create an overtly politicised space, which is to some extent even provocative. The feminist view is prioritized, the gender and racial identity of the main protagonist is embedded in multiple voices. Black perspective dominates; in an intertextual remark in a story called "At the Lisbon Plate", Brand criticizes Camus for his own white approach, "[h]ow come all this high shit about Camus. Didn't it ever strike you that Meursault was a European and the Arab on the beach was an Arab? And the Arab was an Arab, but this European was Mersault." (111–12) Cross-national interpretations of specific social phenomena makes the reader acutely aware of Brand's disbelief in bridging the gap between white and black systems of world-views. In her opinion to eliminate these inherent differences would be a challenge but possible with an outcome that would satisfy neither side.

The short stories can be read separately from each other; some of them appeared as individual pieces in different literary journals, but most of them are connected to each other on different levels, and thus they form a special literary space.

The first story "Sans Souci" sets the tone for the whole volume. Claudine is estranged from her brutal husband and later from her children, too. The cruel female subjugation is described in a subtle poetic style, which evokes Brand's poetry: "Always in and out of seeing him, or wondering who he was and disbelieving when she knew." (5) In this small community generations live together and the male and female worlds are ostensibly distinct. The consice characterization of Mama, the bar owner, and Uncle Ranni add to the fact that Sans Souci gains real life on the pages.

In "Train to Montreal" the main protagonist goes from Toronto to Montreal to meet one of her lovers. Being black surrounded by white people fills her with fear; she is shaken all through the journey: "She was surprised, really shocked at *all white faces* on the train. Ridiculous of course. It was amazing, given all this time, how alarmed she *still* was

at the sight of *white* faces." (18–9) (emphasis added) The train ride becomes a racial and cultural space, where racial differences are not suppressed. She tries to create a dialogue with a hippie-like young man who seems not to be interested in politics at all.

> "And besides who suppported us in Africa? The United States never gave us any weapons. It's them that we're fighting."
> And he, "I abhor violence of any kind. I don't care which side you're on." (20–1)

She is frustrated for disclosing her views without being understood by a fellow-traveller: "She reprimanded herself for talking to him. She felt she had been duped into revealing her opinions. It would have been best to keep quiet instead of giving this white boy so much effort." (23)

During the journey her sense of fear deepens; her emotional space is becoming darker and darker. She hears children singing ironically about Montreal's two largest ethnic groups the French and the Italian: "Wops and frogs, Montreal is full of frogs." (24) Wop means "without official papers", describing the Italian community, and "frog" refers to French-Canadians. She thinks: "She should stand up before they did, before they started singing about 'Wops and niggers'". (24) She is frightened with good enough reason. When she gets off the train she is shouted at:

She would be safe among other passengers. Finally, she met the escalator, then "Nigger whore!" a rough voice behind yelled hoarsely. She kept walking, slightly stumbling onto the clicking stairs. "Whore! Nigger! Whore!" (27)

The racial hegemony is voiced in a very distressing way. Her sense of belonging is utterly deranged.

The main character in "Blossom" has a telling name. Having been humiliated by serving white people, she decides to change her life and "bloom": "She look at she face in the mirror and figure that she look like an old woman too. Ten years she here now, and nothing shaking, just getting older and older, watching *white* people live." (37) (emphasis added) To achieve this end she returns to her own past. Brand explains the need for rootedness to Hutcheon:

> Yes, each time I write, I find that I've got to go back. I have to go back five hundred years to come again. Blossom had to go back to come back again to make everything beautiful, to understand anything about the world that she was living in. She had to dig into

> that past of hers which she retained; she becomes an Obeah woman because that was one of the things that black people in the Americas managed to retain, some sense of the past that is not a past controlled by those things that seem to control her now. (273)

Blossom turns to, and builds up a mystical relationship with Oya, the black goddess and becomes a priestess to her. She talks in "old African tongues" (42).

> Each night Blossom grow more into Oya. Blossom singing, singing for Oya to come,
> "Oya arriwo Oya, Oya arriwo Oya, Oya, kauako arriwo, Arripiti O Oya."
> Each night Blossom learn a new piece of Oya and finally, it come to she. She had the power to see and the power to fight; she had the power to feel pain and the power to heal. For life was nothing as it could be taken away any minute; waht was earthly was fleeting; what could be done was joy and it have no beauty in suffering.
> "Oya O Ologbo O de, Ma yak baMa Who! leh, Oya O de, Ma yak ba Ma Who! leh, Oya Oh deO Ologo arrivo, Oya Oh de cumale." (40–1)

This particular story demonstrates that Brand lives and writes in a multi-vocal space, a special continuum, where languages commingle. Standard English is juxtaposed to vernacular Carribean English. Heteroglossia becomes one of the means of representing the intricate nature of how cultures exist in contact with one another and thus an inter-cultural space is produced. To maintain one's linguistic heritage is of crucial importance for Brand in accordance with which she endows her characters with idiosyncratic speech manners. The multifaceted nature of cultural representation happens in a peculiar linguistic space.

The short stories "St. Mary's Estate" and "Photograph" echo each other. These are reminiscences of a past childhood in which the specificities of colonial spaciality and colonial subordination are depicted. The construction of the following quotation built on parallels gives emphasis to the clear-cut segregation between whites and blacks:

> This is where I was born. This is the white people's house. This is the overseer's shack. Those are the estate workers' barracks. This is where I was born. That is the white people's house this is the overseers' shack those are the slave barracks. That is the slave owner's house this is the overseer's shack those are the slave barracks. (49)

In "Photograph" the most loveable and strong grandmother brings up her children while their mother is in England trying to gain money. By the time she goes home she has become a stranger not to her children's surprise, though.

> To tell the truth, we were expecting a white woman to come through the door, the way my grandmother had described my mother and the way the whole street that we lived on treated the news of my mother's return, as if we were about to ascend in their respect. (69)

Having spent so much time away, the mother has acquired a "split-*place*" personality. As Yi Fu Tuan says, "Hometown is an intimate place" (144). What is her hometown? Cultural streams flow in different directions between the grandmother, mother, and the children. The unnamed mother figure, who has spent some time abroad trying to support her children back at home also appears in "NoRInsed Blue Sky, No Red Flowe Fences". The split between "self and other" is a painful experience in her everyday life.

> She was always uncomfortable under the passing gazes, muttering to herself that she knew, they didn't have to tell her that she was out of place here. But there was no other place to be right on. The little money fed her sometimes, fed her children back home, no matter the stark scene which she created on the corners of the street. She, black, silent and unsmiling; the child, white, tugging and laughing, or whining. (87)

Her sense of belonging elsewhere, both to a different place and space, is unambiguously articulated here.

The narrator in "I Used To Like the Dallas Cowboys" is back on an unnamed island to join the revolution there. The story shows that racism is present in every area of life. The sports-fan narrator "used to like the Dallas Cowboys" in Canada because they had black players. Her view changes, "Four days ago the island was invaded by America. ... [w]hen they're not playing, the Cowboys can be deadly. For the political climate on the island, as Monika Kaup observes, "Brand blames contemporary American hegemony and, by implication, ongoing imperialism."

Ayo in "Sketches in Transit ... Going Home" flies home to join the revolution in Grenada, where Brand actually worked during the invasion. The plane is full of expatriots who go back to Trinidad for a short while because of the carnival that is held there. Ayo is

disappointed by this crowd. They become louder and louder drinking full of excitement to go home yet denying it.

> "I can't eat my bread white any more"
> "I would miss the winter if I ever go back."
> "Life is much better here, yes."
> "Alberta better, it don't have a set of black people. That is why I like it there."
> It was a sign of prosperity to lose the taste for home-made bread and to feel like fainting in the heat.

They overtake the plane, "Canadian anonymity was giving way to Trinidadian familiarity." (141) Their double-mindedness creates a destructive mentality and also a precarious social behaviour: "They felt that they owned the air*space*, the skies going south. Coming north maybe, the Canadians could tell them what to do, but not going home. They blared the music even louder and danced in the aisles." (141) (emphasis added) Ayo offers multiple cultural perspectives without being biased in any direction. She is convinced about having to help her own people: "She was determined to end the ambiguity. What had said for years. When the revolution comes, I'm going to be there." (145)

Brand applies different fictive strategies in the multi-layered stories, and yet they have a homogeneous rhetorical style in a fairly clear political context.

Despite the difference in the narrative choice of Clarke's and that of Brand's we can only agree with Lefebvre, who says, "Every language is located in space. Every discourse says something about a space. Distinction must be drawn between discourse *in* space, discourse *about* space and the discourse *of* space" (132). On the basis of the text analysis of *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* and *Sans Souci* different ways of space indications have been demonstrated. It has been shown that colonial space has its idiosyncratic nature hand in hand with its literary representation.

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DONALD E. MORSE

THE END OF THE WORLD IN AMERICAN HISTORY AND FANTASY: THE TRUMPET OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

> *Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost,—and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment.* Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance"

The fantastic exists in a symbiotic relation with consensus reality.[1] Yet while we acknowledge that one person's fantasy is another's reality, we often neglect to affirm that one era's reality is another's fantasy. George Landow reminds us that "fantasy and our conception of what is fantastic depend upon our view of reality: what we find improbable and unexpected follows from what we find probable and likely, the fantastic will therefore necessarily vary with the individual *and the age*" (107 emphasis added). The events of 11 September 2001, for example, once considered the stuff of fantastic novels suddenly became reality in all their appalling detail. Similarly, as I write, the number one book on *The New York Times* Best Seller list is a fantastic work, *Desecration* by Tim LaHayne and Jerry B. Jenkins—

[1] There are many definitions of the fantastic, but most rely on a contrast between our notions of how and where reality relates to the fantastic. Kathryn Hume, for instance, describes the fantastic as "the deliberate departure from the limits of what is usually accepted as real and normal" (xii) and goes on to define "*Fantasy as any departure from consensus reality*" (21).

one of the most successful writing teams of modern times. Their new novel, the ninth in the "Left Behind" series, continues the story begun some eight books ago when, in the introductory novel, the world as we know it came to a complete, abrupt end. At that "time" at the end of time, the saved were taken up into heaven in "The Rapture" while those left behind became, in novel after novel, the characters who have played out LaHayne and Jenkins' reading of the Book of Revelation.[2] That such a work should become a best seller by appealing to America's sense of an end to time and capture, thereby, a large segment of the popular American imagination should come as no surprise. After all, "America [...] is inevitably the most millenarian of all nations even though so far it has avoided the two extremes of modern millenarianism, fascism and Marxist-Leninism," as Harold Bloom contends (155).

Yet America has experienced most of the spectrum of millenarianism in between those two dictatorial polar extremes, especially in the last two centuries. Apocalypse as reality—rather than as a religious fantasy—has more than once defined United States' consensus reality. Throughout the nineteenth century "reality" in the popular imagination became for many a joining of a widespread belief in Apocalypse with an increasing belief generally in human progress.[3] Solving the problem of longitude late in the eighteenth century, for instance, opened up the entire world to exploration that led to the expansion of European empires in the nineteenth century. Progress appeared obvious given that century's unprecedented fast-paced technological innovation and change that occurred in the wake of the eighteenth century's more fundamental changes.[4] In the British

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[2] I have not studied all nine books in great detail. The triumphal tone of the volumes I did peruse appeared directed against scientists and others who could not imagine all the fantastic things that would happen—that is, become consensus reality—when the world ended with the Second Coming.

[3] These two beliefs coincided and came into conflict with a third: the disquieting scientific discoveries of "deep time" (the phrase is John McPhee's qtd. in Gould, *Full House* 18) and natural selection that altered forever humanity's view of time, this world, and humanity's place in both.

[4] "This uniquely and distinctively Lamarckian style of human cultural inheritance gives our technological history a directional and cumulative character that no natural Darwinian evolution can possess" (Gould *Full House* 222).

Museum, Karl Marx formulated his Christian heresy of unlimited progress for the masses. "In Paris, the historian Gizot drew vast audiences to his masterly lectures on the history of Europe in which he argued that the fundamental idea embedded in the word 'civilization' is progress" (Whitrow 177). In fact, the work of nineteenth-century historians, from Edward Gibbon at the beginning of the century to the Edwardians, such as William Gordon Holmes, at the end, reflected their passionate commitment to recording human progress, English supremacy, and the positive goodness of science.[5] E. B. Taylor, the Oxford anthropologist, argued in 1871 "that the history of man, as revealed by a study of the implements he has used, is indubitably 'the history of an upward development'" (Whitrow 178). The nineteenth-century missionary movement sent out men and women from England and America to save the souls and bring them into the light those in the dark of Africa, South America, and Asia. A member of one of the less fortunate races would, thanks to their efforts, be able to eat with knife and fork and "sit one day, his hair cut, washed, smoothed with macassar oil, in a huge armchair reading a paper" (Wertenbaker 30). Herbert Spencer summed up much of the current thinking in his highly influential, timely essay, "Universal Progress, Its Laws and Cause."[6] But it was Alfred Lord Tennyson, the poet laureate who best caught the temper of the times in his popular poem, "Locksley Hall":

> Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.
> Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change,
> Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day;
> Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

In contrast, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Emily Dickinson in the United States distrusted progress believing

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[5] Holmes linear model of history supported his belief in "the ultimate culmination of Greece and Rome in resistance to the barbarian hordes from the East, and the birth of the British Empire" (Hart 21).

[6] "Spencer arrived at his concept of evolution—as the trend towards increasing differentiation coupled with integration by giving greatest generality to the idea of progress as the product of advancing division of labor, which Adam Smith has made into a commonplace among economists" (Anderski 8n1). But Spencer's definition of the evolutionary process appears more applicable to human society than it does to the flora and fauna of nature.

that at its best it was a mere will of the wisp. "Society never progresses" pronounced Emerson in "Self-Reliance" (279). Thoreau seized on the more concrete, almost sacred inventions of the telegraph and the railroad to convey his point: "We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate" (*Walden* 36).[7] Worse, he ridiculed the notion that we have to get somewhere on the highly prized railroad: "We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us" (63). He described himself instead as "a sojourner in civilized life" (1)—a rare figure in the highly energetic, get-up-and-go America of the nineteenth century.

Emily Dickinson also vigorously disagreed that humanity was enjoying "the younger day." In her vision of the world, God approves of the death and destruction that she saw all around her from the cemetery behind the house where she lived to the robin on the front walk or to the early spring flowers.

> A bird came down the Walk—
> He did not know I saw—
> He bit an Angleworm in halves
> And ate the fellow, raw
>
> (328 lines 1-4)

> Apparently with no surprise
> To any happy flower
> The Frost beheads ... it at its play
> In accidental power—
> The blond Assassin passes on—
> The Sun proceeds unmoved
> To measure off another Day
> For an Approving God.[8] (1024

But rather than sharing Dickinson's vision of omnipresent death, American millenarianism saw the then-current notions of progress as evidence that time's arrow—along with the humans on it—was

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[7] "The wit [in Thoreau's remark] resides in the way means (telegraph) and ends (communicating something important) jostle each other" (Gifford 117).

[8] Robert Frost continues this attack on cosmic order in "Design"—a poem very much in the spirit of Dickinson.

heading straight for the Heavenly City. And, even more important, the fact that time's arrow followed such a progressive line also meant that that line could and must have a stop in apocalypse.[9]

Apocalypse requires, by definition, that time be viewed as finite, linear, and directional. If time were to continue into infinity, then there could be no Last Things, no Last Judgment, obviously, no End of the World, and certainly no "Rapture." To be credible, therefore, Apocalypse depends upon time being finite. Time must also be linear rather than an unending circle, spiral, or whatever.[10] Time's arrow thus becomes is a string of unique events between the two fixed points of creation and termination. Moreover, time must proceed in the direction of a Day of Judgment. This last requirement of directionality derives from the belief that the Other World will occur only with the Eschaton rather than being always present upon death. F. Crawford Burkitt in the Schweich Lectures of 1913 delineates the necessary difference between this pre- or non-apocalyptic notion of the Other World as a *place* and time as continuous with the apocalyptic notion of the Other World not as a place but as a *time to come*, that is, coming into existence only at the end-stopped line. He illustrates this difference by contrasting the non-apocalyptic Other World as seen in Dante's *Commedia* with the apocalyptic one pictured in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel. In Dante's vision, as people die, they enter serially the Other World, much as they entered the Underworld of Greek and Egyptian mythology. There is no waiting.[11] Death, or his surrogate, ushers the person before the Judgment Seat where the deity consigns him or her to the Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso, or Limbo.

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[9] "Time for Christians began with the Creation and would end with Christ's Second Coming. World history was bounded by these two events. [...] our modern concept of history, however rationalized and secularized it may be, still rests on the concept of historical time which was inaugurated by Christianity" (Whitrow 65).

[10] A striking exception to the linearity of most apocalyptic thinking is Bishop Burnett who postulated time as circular beginning with the Creation and returning via the Eschaton. See *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1680) the frontispiece of which Stephen Jay Gould analyses in some detail in *Time's Arrow* (see especially 20–59).

[11] The continuous movement of the dead to the Other World provides a staple of literature from Homer to the present. See, for example, Tom Stoppard, *The Invention of Love* (1998) or Michael Frayne, *Copenhagen* (1998). The latter is discussed in detail by Nick Ruddick in *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* (415–31, see especially 423–26).

For Dante in his vision, Apocalypse becomes impossible—let alone predictable—since although the dead are judged in an Other World, both time and judgment are continuous.

In Michelangelo's fresco, on the other hand, all the dead from all of time are summoned to appear before the throne of God on one future Day of Judgment. Burkitt points out the radically different orientation between these two beliefs. If the Other World is a place, then

> individuals enter one by one when they die; the conception of the Last Judgment, on the other hand, makes the Other World a *time*, an era, which all individuals experience simultaneously, a "Divine Event to which all Nature moves." It is this Divine Event that is set forth by the Apocalypses. The doctrine of the Apocalypses is the doctrine of the last Judgment. (2)[12]

Reinhold Neibuhr, in his remarkable study, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, discusses the differences between those cultures and societies that expect a Messiah and those that do not (see especially volume I). A similar distinction might be drawn between those apocalyptic societies and cultures that expect a last Judgment—often within the believer's lifetime—and those non-apocalyptic societies that do not. Irish culture, for example, does not expect a Last Judgment being firmly rooted in a view of the Other World as a place similar to Dante's that one enters serially upon death. United States culture by and large accepting as consensus reality the apocalyptic belief in the Other World as occurring only at the End of Time, on the other hand, does expect a Last Day of Judgment.[13]

Believers in Apocalypse, whenever it is predicted to occur, exhibit total devotion to this idea. "The emotional effect of apocalyptic writing, as exhibited in the great series which extends from the Book of Daniel to the Apocalypse of Baruch, is that everything is subordinated to the announcement of the End. Everything leads up to

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[12] Once an End to Time is granted, once a Last Day is accepted, Apocalypse becomes possible. And once Apocalypse becomes possible, then it is but a short step to predicting when it will occur, and from there another short step to the rise of millenarianism.

[13] "A nation whose quasi-official high priest is the reverend Billy Graham, author of *Approaching Hoofbeats: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, is rather clearly more likely than most other countries to have strong intimations of the Millennium" (Bloom).

the Judgment and to the New Age that follows it" (Burkitt 47, see also Bloom). From this belief, it is but a short yet necessary step to proselytizing. "[...] the Apocalyptist's part is to stimulate his comrades by sketches of the future" (Burkitt 48). The United States in the nineteenth century thus echoes and re-echoes with exhortations from one or another apocalyptic or millennial group to their fellow citizens to turn and follow their leader before it is too late. In part, this phenomenon paralleled and influenced the Great Revival and other lesser revivals that swept across nineteenth century America. "A radical alternation of American religion commenced with the start of the nineteenth century [...]. Enormous frontier revivals surged on into the cities, and premillennialism accompanied the revivals" (Bloom 223). Against this surge, Dickinson with her different view of reality retreated to her upper room wanting no part of such enthusiasm:

> Some keep the Sabbath going to Church—
> I keep it, staying at Home—
> With a Bobolink for a Chorister—
> And an Orchard, for a Dome—
>
> Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice—
> I just wear my Wings—
> And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,
> Our little Sexton—Sings.
>
> God preachers, a noted Clergyman—
> And the sermon is never long,
> So instead of getting to Heaven, at last—
> I'm going all along (324)

One of the most famous of the nineteenth century millennial movements, the one that radically, successfully challenged consensus reality and that had the longest lasting consequences occurred before the Civil War early in the century. The apocalyptic preaching of William Miller of New York became the basis for a widespread, popular religious revival movement throughout the Northeastern United States and the Midwest that later also swept through part of England. "The estimated number of Millerites has varied from 10,000 to over one million. We will never know the exact number," believes David L. Rowe, historian and biographer of William Miller, but whatever the exact numbers, he concludes, "Millerism was a mass

movement" (2). In addition, the Millerite movement "used truly modern professional methods of propagation: newspapers, itinerant speakers, and professional organizers, both lay and religious. Truly, Millerism was the religious analogue of the Whig's successful professionalization of American politics" (Rowe 2). Miller, himself, a devoted student of the bible, concluded from his study that the Second Coming of Christ was imminent. The world would end "on or about" 1843. This was no fantasy but an immanent reality. Miller based his predictions on carefully worked out, mathematically exact charts—all based on his thorough reading. "Miller transmuted history into eschatology, seeing the past as apostasy and the future as apocalypse" (Butler 191). Of course, there was the difficulty that all his assumptions about the bible, its contents, and his literalist reading of it were faulty—even though most of them remain popular today with a large segment of the United States population. Miller's fundamental error was attempting to read myth and story as a scientifically exact description of the origin and nature of the world, which for most people like Miller meant universe, since he and his followers equated planet Earth with the universe. Equating the Earth with the universe and reading the myths and stories in Genesis as literally true, Miller then added a symbolic reading of the "prophetic" biblical books. A day mentioned in the "prophetic" books was read as a year of current Earth time. Miller then compounded his error by making detailed, elaborate, and usually quite accurate calculations but all based upon similarly weak premises. The prophetic charts of his followers, Charles Fitch and Apollos Hale, like those of Joshua V. Himes were in turn based upon Miller's prophecies. They remain a marvel to read and interpret (see illustration in Arthur, 44–45).

In making such elaborate calculations, Miller was following the well-tried method of several prophetic predecessors. The most famous, Archbishop James Ussher, in 1650 had gone through much the same process in Ireland. Ussher's predictions were destined to become almost synonymous with Apocalypse and millennialism well into the twentieth century. In *Annals of the Old Testament*, "by translating the myth/metaphor of the creation into the literal realm of calendar and clock time" Ussher calculated that creation occurred at exactly 9:00 in the morning, 26 October 4004 B. C. E. (Gifford 72)

and the end of the world would occur exactly six thousand years later on a Thursday in October 1997. Although his was only one among many such calculations, it became one of the most famous, one of the most notorious because, like Miller's, it was one of the most exact. In giving a definite date—though one far in the future—Ussher, like Miller two centuries later, left himself open to ridicule by those who did not sympathize with his warnings. Since Ussher's date lay almost three and a half centuries in the future, it had, however, all of the advantages but none of the disadvantages of being precise. It was obviously neither demonstrable nor provable. In contrast, Miller's date for the end of the world lay well within his life expectancy and that of most of his followers. Sometime before 1831 when he began to preach on the end of the world, he "added up the prophetic numbers and found that the sums converged on 1843" (Doan 123). "I found," he wrote later in his three volume *Works*, "in going through the Bible, the end of all things was clearly and emphatically predicted, both as to time and manner. I believed; and immediately the duty to publish this doctrine, that the world might believe and get ready to meet the Judge and Bridegroom at his coming, was impressed upon my mind" (1.12 qtd. in Rowe 21). Based on his belief, he began to preach that the world would end "on or before" 1843. But even that prediction was not specific enough for his followers. Only when an exact date was agreed upon did Miller gain an extensive following and only then did his movement acquire real authority. As several historians of Millerism have noted "the power of the Millerite message increased in tandem with its immediacy. The promise and threat of meeting the Lord at any moment brought audiences to a pitch of excitement. [...] The result was the astounding impact that has led historians to consider the great revival of 1843–1844 as essentially inspired by Millerism" (Doan 122). Cries of "1843! 1843!" echoed from Miller's great revival tent. "For most Millerites, mention of 1843 served as a reminder of a supernatural order so real as to be almost palpably, physically present" (Doan 123).

Some well to do farmers sold or gave away their farms, their clothes, and other possessions, others did not plant crops because the end was indeed at hand. "In the words of John Chrysostom, virginity made plain that 'the things of the resurrection stand at the door'"

(Peter Brown qtd. in Bloom 162). Nor was there a need to heed the biblical admonition to "sell all ye have and give it to the poor" for both the poor and the rich along with the moderately well off were now all living in the End of Time and none had need of the things of this world.

But 1843 came and went without incident as did 21 March and 3 April 1844, the other "two popular dates for Christ's return" (Butler 195). After this first disappointment "the so-called 'seventh-month' faction, made up of youthful, under-educated 'radicals,' usurped or bypassed Millerite leadership, and by August predicted the Second Advent on October 22, 1844" (Butler 196). Miller himself eventually agreed to this new date. Some Millerites and their followers gathered on the high places on that day in October so to be among the first to greet the Second Coming and welcome the New World. But the faithful had once again to endure yet another disappointment. This time, no one recalculated the figures and no one reprogrammed the Big Event. Instead, in a state of shock, they returned to their homes and communities and painfully re-began their lives. (See Butler for an excellent account of their reactions and action.) They had expected the Second Coming in 1844 but would receive instead the American Civil War.

Ironically, the widespread acceptance of Miller's prophecy of the end of all time coincides with the dawning of the understanding of two of the most extraordinary scientific discoveries about the extent and nature of time. Both would undermine completely the very possibility of Apocalypse—except for fantastic fiction. James Hutton and Charles Darwin discovered that time, far from being a finite arrow pointing towards The End, was potentially infinite and virtually without direction pointing towards nothing but the indefinite future. The geologist's discovery of "deep time" extended the life of the universe from thousands past millions into billions of years. "Time which measures everything in our idea, and is often deficient to our schemes," wrote Hutton, "is to nature endless and as nothing; it cannot limit that by which alone it had existence; and as the natural course of time, which to us seems infinite, cannot be bounded by any operation that may have an end" (Hutton qtd. in Mitchison 9). Charles Lyell in his highly influential *Principles of Geology* (1830) linked Hutton's

discovery at the end of the eighteenth century to Newton's discovering the immensity of space:

> Such views of the immensity of past time, like those unfolded by the Newtonian philosophy in regard to space, were too vast to awaken ideas of sublimity unmixed with a painful sense of our incapacity to conceive a plan of such infinite extent. Worlds are seen beyond worlds immeasurably distant from each other, and beyond them all innumerable other systems are faintly traced on the confines of the visible universe. (qtd. in Gould, *Arrow* 2)

Lyell and Hutton together forced a confrontation with the concept of deep time. A concept so alien to human experience that it was not until well into the nineteenth century that it became generally accepted in the scientific community. Moreover, most people even today appear unable to comprehend this concept except through metaphor. "John McPhee has provided the most striking metaphor of all (in *Basin and Range* [1980]): Consider the earth's history as the old measure of the English yard, the distance from the king's nose to the tip of his outstretched hand. One stroke of a nail file on his middle finger erases human history" (Gould, *Arrow* 3).

A second ontological shock occurred with Darwin's discovery and publication of the principle of natural selection. Darwin's idea, that local adaptation could, over time, lead to the creation of an entirely new species, came into conflict with received wisdom which often meant simple biblical literalism. All species were present at the initial creation as described in Genesis. "Each one is perfectly adapted to its place in the world, according to the wisdom of God" (Wertenbaker 35). All were accounted for in Noah's Ark, according to the literalists. God had not created anything new since the time described in Genesis. Darwin's local adaptation—he studiously avoided using the word, "evolution" until forced to by Herbert Spencer's popularization—vastly increased the world's time by postulating continuous creation over eons. Such seismic shocks to popular, received wisdom and belief proved exhilarating to the scientific community.

> Who could ever match the thrill of the earlier discovery vouchsafed to geologists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, that time comes in billions ... rather than thousands of years. Once geology grasped this great reform, no other intellectual reconstruction could ever again be so vast. And whatever the

> excitement and pleasure of new discoveries made every year by biologists, no one will ever again experience the ultimate intellectual high of reconstructing all nature with the passkey of evolution—a privilege accorded to Charles Darwin, and now closed to us. (Gould, *Full House* 224–25)

But not everyone so reveled in these discoveries. Barely had the nineteenth century ended and a new century dawned when George McCready Price, refusing to accept either the concept of deep time or the concept of natural selection, originated "the pseudoscience known to its adherents by the oxymoron 'scientific creationism.' [...] Price wished to affirm biblical literalism by an inductive approach based strictly on fieldwork" (Gould, *Arrow* 23). His book, *The New Geology* (1923) remains a clear reaction against this new knowledge that humans were no longer at the pinnacle of creation but were a local response to local conditions—conditions created over billions and billions of years. Still in print today, Price's book is regularly cited in debates in state legislatures of the United States. More shamefully still, some of those states have mandated the study of oxymoronic "scientific creationism."[14] In the most millenarian of nations, large numbers of people at the beginning of the twenty-first century still deny the truth of the revelations of geologic time and natural selection. Many imitate those who, at the end of the nineteenth century, fled to the safety to millenarianism and McCready's ironically titled, "new geology." Despite the seismic shocks of the Copernican, Newtonian, and Galilean revolutions, despite the discovery of "deep time" and Darwin's discovery that local adaptation to change produces new species, the popular view of time in the United States remains that of the record of human progress leading to Apocalypse.[15]

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[14] The editor-in-chief of the *Scientific American* thought the "creationism" enough of a real and present danger to devote several pages to an extensive article "15 Answers to Creationist Nonsense" (62–69). One of the most appalling statistics in the accompanying essay was the revelation that according to a substantial study over fifty percent of Americans actually believe that human beings have been on the earth for less than 10,000 years! This nonsensical belief is maintained at a time when serious debates attempt to decide where in a range of between three and seven million years ago humans actually did first appear.

[15] But it might be well to recall that there is also a Flat Earth Society in the United States with official headquarters in Ann Arbor, Michigan that maintains in all seriousness that the rotundity of the earth is but an illusion.

At the end of the twentieth century, as at the end of the nineteenth, a significant number of Americans still expected a new Age to dawn and many believed the New Age would coincide with the new century and the new millennium. The current Age of Agony would then be over "by God's victorious intervention on behalf of His saints, when He comes, or sends His Representative to come, to set things right" (Burkitt 7). The early "Christians expected the visible return of their lord to judge the nations: they received instead the Roman Empire itself" (Burkitt 13).[16] Other, more current, expectations such as the "Rapture" depicted in LaHayne and Jenkins have also been thwarted. Those who, at the end of the nineteenth century, expected Apocalypse to coincide with the arrival of the new century, received instead World War I and the twentieth century of wars. What do the current crop of millenarians, estimated at over ten million Americans, expect? Popular culture, popular religion, popular cults, and the morning newspaper all give answers: besides The Rapture, there is also Childhood's End, The Age of Aquarius, Jonesville, Waco, and/or children slaughtering other children with automatic weapons on school playgrounds.

Separating fantasy from reality often proves difficult. Looking back to the nineteenth century Millerite movement from a twenty-first century vantage point, for instance, the outstanding characteristic appears to be the participants' religious commitment, rather than their foolishness. Although speaking of a vastly different experience, Thoreau describes exactly the Millerites:

> Every man has to learn the points of compass again as often as he awakes, whether from sleep or any abstraction. Not till we are lost, in other words, not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations. (*Walden* 118)

In time, many Millerites found themselves, realized they were still in the world of reality and not of the fantastic and so reached an accommodation with what had failed to occur. The physical non-event now known as the Great Disappointment was slowly, painfully

[16] So certain were many of the early Christians of Christ's eminent return that they, like Paul, never bothered to date their letters.

transformed into an event of deep metaphysical significance.[17] Ellen White, for instance, the Adventist visionary "linked the delay of the Advent to the need for morally improving God's people" (Butler 201). These Adventist and former Millerites followed a well-established pattern in moving from Apocalypse to Gnosis or from looking without to looking within. "Prophetic religion becomes apocalyptic when prophecy fails, and apocalyptic religion becomes Gnosticism when apocalypse fails, as fortunately it always has and, as we must hope, will fail again" (Bloom 30). The Millerites began with prophecy, continued with apocalypse, and when apocalypse failed in the Great Disappointment, they looked within themselves. That inner faith became, in turn, the basis for the establishment of a new religion. Kenelm Burridge, a sympathetic observer of millenarian movements describes the value of such experience. "Whether as fool, fraud, saint, respectable bourgeois, farmer or tycoon, the pain of the millennium belongs only to man. It is why he is man, why, when the time comes, he has to make a new man" (qtd. in Butler and Numbers xx).

The Millerites believed in the reality of Apocalypse enough to make it the center of their lives and they were willing to risk all for their belief. Ironically, in their own way, and out of their Great Disappointment, they, too, like Thoreau, Dickinson, and Emerson had to "front [...] the essential facts of life" (Thoreau 62). The central, essential fact was the failure of their millennial beliefs. The world was no different on 23 October 1844 than it had been on 22 October except for their Great Disappointment. The earth and humans on it remained the product of billions of years of evolutionary activity. There would be no progress, no following time's arrow to the very End of Time, to the Day of Judgment, to the Parousia. Turning away from failed prophecy to gnosis, many Millerites followed a pattern of self-knowledge and self-reliance expostulated by Emerson, and embodied in the lives and works of Emerson, Dickinson, and

[17] Butler describes how "these Adventists believed that on the fateful tenth day of the seventh month Christ [...] had come not to earth but had moved from the holy to the most holy place in a heavenly sanctuary. The "cleansing of the sanctuary" [a typical Millerite millennial belief] had not referred to Christ's Second Coming but rather to the investigation of the sins of God's people in preparation for the end of the world" (200).

Thoreau.[18] Emerson advocated self-reliance, being "empowered by eloquence and vision" (Bloom 16), rather than being distracted by the "popgun" of Apocalypse that sounds like "the crack of doom" ("The American Scholar" 64). Rather than simplistic literalism, Dickinson endorsed telling "all the Truth but tell it slant— / Success in Circuit lies [...] The Truth must dazzle gradually / Or every man be blind—" (1129). Thoreau juxtaposed to a belief in the End of Time, a belief in being "anxious to improve the nick of time. [...] to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and the future, which is precisely the present moment" (10). If those 'ladies of the land weaving toilet cushions against the last day" were "injuring eternity"(4), the best remedy was not to believe that eternity would arrive next week or next month or next year with the Second Coming that was fantastic but to fill every minute of today so that one would have a sense of life and having lived that would be reality. "I went to the woods," Thoreau confessed, "because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived" (62). To do so he went fishing in the stream of time rather than progressing along the arrow of time to the End of Time.

Against this nineteenth-century backdrop of unrealized apocalypse, Jenkins and LeHane's multi-volume twentieth- twenty-first-century sequential novel would appear even more fantastic were it not for the authors obvious, if unstated, commitment to an immanent apocalyptic moment. Missing from their work, however, is a date similar to Miller's "1843" or Ussher's October 1997—a definite time-certain for

[18] Of those Millerites who stayed in the advent movement, who went beyond the pain and disappointment, some found new dedication and experienced religious awakening that resulted in a dramatic renewal of Shakerism, the establishment of the Church of the Seventh Day Adventists, and, later, the beginning of the Jehovah's Witnesses. As the advent historian, Jonathan Butler contends, "Like every other millenarian movement, Millerism met with obvious failure, and yet out of this failure eventually emerged another of the American sectarian success stories [...]. [The] durable, complex, and established Adventist sect [...]" (190). Rather than a belief in either Progress or Apocalypse, the lesson of Millerism appears to lie closer to those to be derived from a reading of Emerson's essays or Dickinson's poetry or, especially of Thoreau's *Walden*. "Not till we are lost [...] do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations" (Walden 118).

the end of time. Were any such similar dates to appear in these novels —and there are still more volumes to come—then the whole series would align itself not with the literature of the fantastic but with the consensus reality of their millennial community of true believers and readers.[19] But such a departure from the fantastic has its dangers, for that consensus reality would, in turn, have to assimilate the inevitable disappointment "when apocalypse fails, as fortunately it always has [...]" (Bloom 30). Meantime, such novels help illustrate the fluidity of meaning in the very terms "the fantastic" and "reality."

Notes

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[19] Pollsters estimate that there are about 10 million premillennialists among us, that is, people who expect Jesus to return, in his resurrected body, before he then inaugurates a thousand-year kingdom on earth, over which he will rule. Yet the premillennialists are only a small fraction of believers; rather more than 100 million American adults expect a Second Coming of Jesus, even if they do not necessarily believe that he will found Kingdom of God in this world" (Bloom 219–20).

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LENKE NÉMETH

ACADEMIA AS A CARNIVALIZED SPACE: A BAKHTINIAN READING OF DAVID MAMET'S *OLEANNA*

Conversational dissonance manifest in the characters' disjointed utterances and pauses to chart their innermost conflicts as well as a recurrent concern with the corrupt world of American business have become David Mamet's trademarks since his first major success with *American Buffalo* in 1975. Business appears to be a congenial *site* into which Mamet projects all his worries, concerns, and criticism about an America that is portrayed as falling apart. In the space and context of business, he can address nearly all the themes he has been haunted by: corruption and venality in business, the degradation of the business ethic into deception and betrayal, the decline of American values, the decay of American idealism, the loss of the American Dream and of the frontier spirit, urban alienation, the communication breakdown between people, and the discordant relationship between men and women.

On the face of it, Mamet's highly provocative and controversial play *Oleanna* (1992) explores a student-teacher relationship, the consequences of ineffective teaching, and the issue of sexual harassment in the context of American higher education. Apparently, this pedagogical environment is a far cry from the world of cutthroat competition in the business world powerfully portrayed by Mamet in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1993) and *Speed-the-Plow* (1997), the latter dealing with the corrupt Hollywood film industry. In my reading, however, *Oleanna* could easily be aligned with Mamet's previous "business plays." My assumption is that the

intrusion of business-like mentality onto the terrain of higher education conventionally believed to be free of economic forces causes frictions between a female student and her professor. In the present context I am going to challenge the widely-held claim sustaining that *Oleanna* indicts political correctness on college campuses in America.[1] Since the world emerging in Mamet's drama evokes a chaotized world characterized by radical transformations and subversions of conventional routines (degraded value system, aborted human relationships), it is legitimate to claim that it has been saturated by a "carnival sense of the world" (Bakhtin 107). Thus, the approach I intend to take will rely on Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's concepts and descriptive-analytical tools inherently pertaining to carnivalized literature.

For the present analysis, however, I find it necessary to introduce *business space* as a new *carnival image*. Acquiring a large number of various functions, business transforms into a multi-dimensional and multi-functional *space* that absorbs and assumes the characteristics of a *carnival image*. Like the traditional images of carnival (fire and laughter), which "unite within themselves both poles of change and crisis: birth and death (the image of pregnant death), blessing and curse [...]" (Bakhtin 126), *business space* also encompasses *ambivalence* and *dualism*, the fundamental requirements of an artistic image as initiated by Bakhtin.

When endowed with artistic qualities in representation, the Mametian *business space* possesses an enormous character-shaping force since it considerably determines the reactions and actions of characters. The negative pole of *business space* manifests itself most blatantly in the *degradation* of human values and *disfigurement* of human relationships. In accordance with its dualistic nature, the "blessing" of *business space* is embedded precisely in its "curse": its immensely degenerating effect may bring to a character a lucid insight into his own nature and his relations with others (the professor in

[1] cf. Arthur Holmberg. "The Language of Misunderstanding." *Theater* 24.1 (1992): 94–95. Showalter Elaine. "Acts of Violence. David Mamet and the Language of Men." Rev. of *Glengarrry Glen Ross*, by David Mamet. Odeon Haymarket, London. Rev. of *Oleanna*, by David Mamet. Orpheum Theatre, New. Orpheum Theatre, New York. *Times Literary Supplement* 6 Nov. 1992: 16–17.

Oleanna), or may engender the women characters' revolt against the corrupt occurrences and practices in the patriarchal order (Carol in *Oleanna*).

The operational force of this new image, however, is not restricted to merely dramatic works that are conventionally labeled as "business plays." Assuming a *protean nature*, this image tends to intrude both the public and private realms of the characters' lives in Mamet's dramatic oeuvre. For instance, imprints of this image are inscribed in the love relationships of the couples in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (1974), in *The Woods* (1977), and in *House of Games* (1987). Thereby *business space* seems to acquire a sense of *quasi-transcendence* that can substitute for the lack of transcendence conspicuously absent from Mamet's plays.

The uneasy welding of the Academia and business space and its effects on human relationships as thematized in *Oleanna* can serve as a blatant example of the degenerating influence of *business space*. What on an archetypal level may seem to be an "unending struggle for power between male and female" (Holmberg 95), from the perspective of carnivalization, the conflict between the university professor and his female student dramatizes the destructive effect of business space on human values and relationship.

Influenced by business space pervading the "Groves of Academe," both John and Carol view their careers in a purely business framework. The negative side of the carnival image of business space gives rise to the emergence of their *business-oriented selves,* which means that for both John and Carol, a drive for existential security has replaced a genuine and devoted interest in teaching and pursuing studies in college, respectively.

> "Critical carnivalistic situations" illuminate to what extent their business-oriented selves have gained control over their acts. By studying for a college degree, Carol is planning to make herself marketable. Her ambition is perfectly in tune with the American ethos of vertical mobility and, clearly, this pragmatic understanding of education seems to be the best chance for her social advancement and economic betterment. Yet, the system that takes her money in tuition cannot "guarantee" her education. The problem Carol confronts at the college can be translated into business terminology: she does not get good value for her money. As her complaints below reveal, apparently, besides her money, she invests her energy into

learning, and she does what she is expected to do, yet she fails the professor's course:
CAROL. I'm just: I sit in class I ... (*She holds up her notebook.*) I take notes ...
JOHN. (*simultaneously* with "notes"): Yes. I understand. What I am trying to
tell you is that some, some basic ...
CAROL.. ... I ...
JOHN. ... one moment: some basic missed communi...
CAROL. I'm doing what I'm told. I bought your book, I read your ...
JOHN. No, I'm sure you ...
CAROL. No, no, no. I'm doing what I'm told. It's *difficult* for me. It's *difficult* ... (Mamet 6)

However, swamped by the multiple pressures of his career options, John is unable to comprehend Carol's grievances. This brief dialogue exchange also illustrates his impatient and arrogant attitude toward Carol, which can be attributed to the distorting effect of *business space* on *his* personality. From the first moment of their encounter, he is distracted by the financial troubles of a new house that he has already contracted to purchase, counting on the advancement of his expected tenured position. The professor's acts and discourse—obviously, under the influence of his *business-oriented self*—are reminiscent of a businessman rather than a professor. I suppose that the italicized words in John's excuse below, in the drama, function as explicit subtextual indicators of John's agitated state of mind and a business-like lexis dominating his discourse: "I have a *telephone* call that I have to make. And an *appointment*, which is rather *pressing*; though I sympathize with your concerns, and though I wish I had the time, this was not a previously *scheduled meeting*" (12–13).

A "carnivalistic paired scene" underlies that both Carol and John give priority to financial security over a love of learning and a love of teaching, respectively. Desperately trying to convince the professor why she needs the pass grade, Carol alludes to the difficulties arising from her different social and economic background:

JOHN... . wait one moment. I ...
CAROL. It *is* true. I have *problems* ...
JOHN... . every ...
CAROL... . I come from a different *social* ...
JOHN... . ev ...

CAROL. a different economic ...
JOHN... . Look:
CAROL. No. I: when I *came* to this school:
JOHN. Yes. Quite ... (*Pause*)
CAROL... . Does that mean nothing?
JOHN. ...but look: look...
CAROL... . I ... (7–8)

Again, the professor's business-oriented self prevents him from taking any notice of Carol's plea. A "paired scene" of the above incident in the second act, however, spotlights a totally different side of the professor, for whom financial security and upward mobility seem to be the first priorities. The two scenes taken together reflect "the ambivalent whole," namely the professor's hypocrisy when in power and his true motives when deprived of power. In *his* "critical situation," the impending threat of losing the tenure brings to John a revelation about his own nature and his relations with others. As his chances of obtaining the tenure severely diminish, due to the student's charges against him, he discloses his true motivation for the tenured position: "That tenure, and security, and yes, and *comfort*, were not, of themselves, to be scorned; and were even worthy of honourable pursuit" (44). By complaining about the personal loss, he would suffer if he did not get the tenure, he tries to win Carol's sympathy: "I will lose my *deposit*, and the home I'd picked out for my wife and son will go by the boards" (45). The empowered Carol, however, turns out to be an excellent student who has mastered her professor's strategy. Adopting the same cynical attitude as John exhibited toward her in the first Act, she entirely ignores his plea, and replies: "[w]hat do you want of me?" (45).

In addition to its character-shaping power, *business space* also operates as a structuring principle in *Oleanna*. As a result of the destructive influence of *business space*, higher education has undergone a process of *commercialization* both in its aims and practice: knowledge has been *commodified,* and simultaneously, the method of instruction has been *depersonalized.* Concurrently, both the professor and the student appear to be the beneficiaries as well as the victims of these phenomena, as I will argue below. Ironically, the professor's opinion highlighting these disturbing tendencies in higher education unambiguously reveals a fundamental "carnivalistic

contrast" between his discourse and his acts. His disregard for Carol's problems, and the evidence of his own university career, which is basically motivated by working for power and security, prove to be the most precise illustrations of all the aspects of his critique.

The professor claims that higher education does not educate but "it is something-other-than-useful" (28), and he even degrades it to a mere "ritual" that "all are entitled to" (28). He ascribes the loss of clearly set objectives in higher education to its democratization process whereby masses of people have gained access to colleges: "I say college education, since the war, has become so a matter of course, and such a fashionable necessity, for those either of or aspiring *to* to [sic] the new vast middle class, that we *espouse* it, as a matter of right, and have ceased to ask, 'What is it good for?'" (33) Yet, *he may well be* one of the beneficiaries of this crucial transformation, as his earlier confessional remark suggests: "I came *late* to teaching. And I found it Artificial. The notion of 'I know and you do not'; and I saw the *exploitation* in the education process" (22). Nevertheless, from the aggressive and condescending style the professor exhibits toward Carol at the beginning of their encounter, one can conclude that he has completely adopted the "I know and you do not" model as well as conclude that he has completely adopted the "I know and you do not" model as well as the principle of *exploitation* condemned by him initially.

The professor's vivid description of the deficiencies of a *ritualized* form of college education illuminates that the concept of *educate* has undergone a drastic semantical carnivalization: "[w]e shove this book at you, we say read it. Now, you say you've read it? I think that you're *lying*. I'll *grill* you, and when I find you've lied, you'll be disgraced, and your life will be ruined. It's a sick game" (28). This kind of *depersonalized* method of instruction leads to the "mass production" of graduates rather than *education* in its genuine, original sense. In other words, the original meaning of the etymologically related Latin *e-ducere* meaning "to foster" and "to bring forth" hidden capabilities and talents from a disciple has degraded *to grill.*

Furthermore, a "carnivalistic contrast" between the professor's apparent *achievements* in his professional career (he has published several books, he will be granted tenure) and his *failure* to teach the

student in *his* own special field of research, namely, in *higher education*, exemplifies the distorting effect of business priorities on his professional approach of teaching. He may well be successful in the *quantifiable* aspects of his career (number of books, rise in payment), yet he has failed in all the roles that a student demands of a teacher: "to acknowledge him in whatever 'role' it may be--authority, benevolence, militancy, knowledge, etc" (Barthes 384). In a scene that I qualify as a "carnivalistic scandal," Carol admits that she does not understand *any* of his books and spells out the help she needs "*Teach* me. *Teach* me" (Mamet 11). Ironically, the title of his book, *The Curse of Modern Education,* carries with it a striking, undercutting "carnivalistic overtone" as well as the dualistic effect of business space: this is the book whose ideas the professor is unable to communicate to the student, yet its success has greatly contributed to his expected promotion. In a "paired scene" in the third act, Carol's effort to ban the professor's books from the curriculum seems to be legitimate from *her* point of view. There is no need for *his* books if he proves to be incompetent in communicating through the ideas in them.

John's confrontation with the student's desperate plea to teach her intensifies John's sense of responsibility, and apparently, he turns into an understanding and helpful educator. He acknowledges that Carol cannot blame herself for not having understood a thing: "that's my *fault*. And that is not verbiage. That's what I firmly hold to be truth. And I am sorry, And I owe you an apology" (17). Feeling shattered by this realization, and also, urged to be acknowledged and appreciated by the student, the professor attempts to restore and build a positive self-image through a reassuring relationship with Carol. So, on the face of it, he becomes generous, considerate, and sympathetic with the student. Paradoxically, the disfiguring influence of business space also saturates these newly evolving traits, and they will completely confuse Carol. John's apparently generous offer to change her grade to "A" signals the operation of business principles: "Your grade for the whole term is an 'A.' If you will come back and meet with me. A few more times" (25). By transgressing the rules and norms at the university, he actually *buys* and *trades* in the student's appreciation. Eventually, he employs corrupt, manipulative practices for his own interests.

Also, in order to fascinate the student with a *personal* and *ancient* mode of instruction, John begins to teach her, somewhat belatedly. He employs *anacrisis,* a basic device of the Socratic dialogue, "a means for eliciting and provoking the words of one's interlocutor, forcing him to express his opinion and express it thoroughly" (Bakhtin 110). The professor exhibits the method in this fashion:

> JOHN. So we confound the *usefulness* of higher education with our granted right to equal access to the same. We, in effect create a *prejudice* toward it [...]
> CAROL... .that it is prejudice that we should go to a school?
> JOHN. Exactly.
> CAROL. How can you say that? How ...
> JOHN. Good. Good. *Good.* That's right! Speak up!
> (Mamet 30)

John's attempt to show Carol this remarkable method of teaching is badly misunderstood by her. Though the professor clarifies to the utterly amazed Carol that: "that's my *job*, don't you know. [...] To provoke you" (32), Carol feels not only puzzled but also grossly embarrassed. Instead of promoting reflection on the aim of schooling as perceived by the professor, the anacrisis prompts *ambivalent* reactions in Carol, and will accelerate an "abrupt change of fate," a reversal of roles between the professor and the student from the second act. She is confronted with a new method of teaching and a more personal voice that puts her on the alert. Carol can justifiably suspect some ulterior motives in the professor's radically altered behavior. Viewed in this light, Carol's decision to report the professor to the Tenure Committee appears to be legitimate.

There is, however, also another side to the coin, which exemplifies the destructive effect of the *business space* on Carol. To obtain knowledge that is taught in this new way defies the utilitarian principles of business as this knowledge should be worked for and not just simply *bought* and *consumed* like a commodity. The generation of "Carols," however, view their university careers in terms of a business enterprise, where *knowledge* has degraded into a *commodity* that can be purchased at a university that has decayed into a *market.* This *commodity-nature* of knowledge evokes Jean-Francois Lyotard's anticipation concerning the state of knowledge in a postmodern

society: "Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be *sold*, it is and will be *consumed* in order to be *valorized* in a new production: in both cases, the goal is *exchange*" (4, emphasis added).

Paradoxically, when the professor discloses his *human* side—not yet distorted by his business-oriented self—he tries to fascinate the student with a new effective mode of teaching, and in general, he treats Carol on equal terms—leads to the student's hostile reactions and eventually, precipitates John's disempowerment. The student will base her charges against the professor exactly on his apparently The student will base her charges against the professor exactly on his apparently human acts and discourse. This incident palpably shows that carnivalization penetrates the deepest core of this play: what is human is not even recognized, and the evidently human seems to be inauthentic.

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ANDRÁS TARNÓC

VIOLENCE AS CULTURAL PROJECTION: THE SOCIOLOGICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE JAMESTOWN MASSACRE

I

This paper combining several social science vantage points viewing the Jamestown Massacre as a collective action, a terrorist act, a manifestation of human aggression, and the work of a rational actor, will perform an interdisciplinary examination of the event. Consequently, the applied model consists of four strands, the sociological one including the contagion, convergence, and resource mobilization theories, in addition to explaining the conditions facilitating terrorism, a psychological segment attempting to chart the terrorist mindset through the application of such concepts as frustration-aggression, negative identity, and narcissistic injury along with Konrad Lorenz's views on human aggression, the third component of the model is the rational actor concept of history, and the fourth one includes Althusser's notion of interpellation and a Merleau-Ponty-inspired analysis of violence. The applied model facilitates a diversified interpretation of the events in question, its interdisciplinary approach leads to a more profound understanding and helps to interpret the Jamestown Massacre not only on the collective, but on the individual level as well. The Jamestown Massacre is located at a curious historical intersection as while the events took place in North America, the Jamestown Colony's subordination to the political will of the British Crown also qualifies it to belong to the

annals of British history. As Andrew Marr wittily pointed out, that "once upon a time the Americans were the British, lost. On the narrow lip of a distant continent, clutching their faith, songs, customs and memories, they were 17th-century space travelers, cut off from Planet Europe with its corruptions and tyrannies" (39). Also, at this time the edifices of a racial hierarchy so characteristic of American history had not yet been in place, thus in fact this tragic encounter between two hostile cultures occurred in a yet to be racialized cultural arena.

Any researcher dealing with this event has to overcome several obstacles, one being the classification of the very episode. A massacre is not a scientific category, as it is informed with substantial emotional content. At first glance due to the tripartite definition of a riot: "a tumultuous disturbance of the peace' resulting from unlawful assembly aiming 'to strike terror into the public mind" (www.lectlaw.com/def2/q053htm), the events do not qualify as such. Certainly the Jamestown Massacre did not originate as an unlawful assembly, as no laws could prohibit the gathering of Native Americans at that time. However, the brutal attack in fact created "a tumultuous disturbance of the peace" and the method employed definitely fulfilled the third requirement.

Another possible approach would involve the comparison of the events of the Jamestown Massacre to the definition of terrorism, established by the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations as "the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" (28 C. F. R. Section 0.85 in www.terrorismfiles.org/encyclopaedia/terrorism.html). Whereas the application of the terrorism label would immediately give rise to charges of presentism, the events of March 22, 1622 certainly resulted in violence both against the government of the Jamestown colony and the individual inhabitants as well. Furthermore, the attackers attempted to realize both political and social objectives demonstrated by the desire to eliminate the English presence and the conversion efforts respectively. Moreover, the premeditated coordination of the attack and the method of its execution resist unequivocal labeling.

Also, the events cannot be seen as an example of traditional crowd behavior, as the Powhatan Indians did not form "a gathering of people

reacting to a nonroutine event" (Brinkerhoff–White 556). Collective behavior, defined by Lofland as "a non-routine action by an emotionally aroused gathering of people who face an ambiguous situation" (qtd. in Brinkerhoff–White 556), or a social movement, defined as "an ongoing goal-directed effort to change social institutions from the outside" (Marwell and Oliver qtd. in Brinkerhoff–White 556), however, contain elements relevant to the events of the Jamestown Massacre. Therefore for the purpose of this paper the Jamestown Massacre will be viewed as a historical event to which the components of riots, terrorism, collective behavior, and social movement would be relevant.

II

The Jamestown Massacre was a carefully planned attack masterminded and put into execution by Opechancanaugh, the deputy chief of the Powhatan Indians on March 22, 1622. The pretext of the event was the death of Nemmattanow, or Jack the Feathers, a prominent member of the Powhatan tribe, at the hand of white settlers resulting from a dispute over Nemattanow being charged with a murder of a trader, called Morgan. The death of Nemattanow served as a right cause for Opechancanaugh to carry out his plan of revenge. Opechancanaugh harboring a lifelong determination to drive out the colonists was motivated by a fear of cultural deterritorialization, the rejection of the English conversion efforts, and a resolution to protect the Amerindian land. Opechancanaugh's career intersected more than once with the British settlers as he was one of the captors of John Smith and afterward was entrapped, held at gunpoint and imprisoned for ransom by the latter during trade negotiations between the two peoples (Dockstader 196–197).

By 1622 the settlers of the Jamestown colony had been lulled into a feeling of false security, believing that peaceful relations with the Indians would last indefinitely. Having felt that the Indian threat has abated, the settlers ventured to move farther away from each other. Also, as Smith reports the colonists would invite Amerindians to their homes and offer them food and lodging. Opechancanaugh's declaration of ending previous hostilities: "He held the peace so firme, the sky should fall or he dissolved it" (Smith 294) reinforced the

impression of a lasting peace. As reported by Smith, on March 21, the night before and on the very morning of the Massacre as well, the Powhatan Indians pretending to sell "Deere, Turkies, Fish, Fruits, and other provisions" (Smith 294) entered the settlers' homes unarmed, and sat down to eat at the breakfast table, then suddenly turned against their hosts and "immediatly with their own tooles slew them most barbarously" (Smith 294). Two days earlier they guided the settlers across the forest and even borrowed one of the colonists' boats to transport themselves. Also people were attacked while working on the fields, and the bodies were severely mutilated. Especially noteworthy and gruesome was the murder of Master George Thorp, a Deputy to the College Lands in charge of the conversion of Indians to Christianity, a process during which he treated the Indians like children, punishing them if they misbehaved and dispensing rewards for accepting his instructions. The total death toll was 347, the largest casualties were suffered at Martin's Hundred (73) and Edward Bennett's Plantation (50) (Smith 301).

The following sociological theories can be helpful in explaining the dynamics of the attackers' behavior. The contagion concept holds that crowd situations lead to "unanimous and intense feelings and behaviors that are at odds with the usual predispositions of the individual participants" (Turner 1964 in Brinkerhoff–White 557), the convergence theory asserts that crowd action is based on the presence of people sharing a common set of predispositions (Brinkerhoff–White 558), and according to the resource mobilization theory, social movements arise "when organized groups compete for scarce resources" (Brinkerhoff–White 565).

The contagion theory provides an explanation to the brutality of the Indians, as they acted in a group, under the command of Opechancanaugh. The gruesome mutilations appear to be at odds with the generally amiable relationship the Indians maintained with the settlers. The spread of the violence was indeed contagious as a result of circular stimulation originating from Opechancanaugh's character. Opechancanaugh's determination can be deduced from previous events, such as the humiliation he suffered at the hands of John Smith. Opechancanaugh's career, perpetually playing a secondary role first to Powhatan, next to Opitchipan filled him with a tremendous desire to

prove himself and demonstrate his capability as a warrior. In fact, masterminding the attack provided ample proof for his mettle as a military leader and his capability as a strategic planner. The sheer brutality of the attackers is demonstrated by the murder of Master George Thorp as he was not simply killed but his corpse was "abused with such spight and scorne...unfitting to be heard with civill eares" (Smith 295). In this case not only the Indians' rejection of the settlers' religious conversion efforts is discernible, but a repressed anger as well leading to an open dismissal of the settlers' treatment of the Native Americans as children. Thorp exercised physical, spiritual, and sexual control over the natives as he was able to punish them for misbehavior, yet "never denied them any thing," (Smith 295) if they complied. Furthermore, the religious conversion effort attempted to superimpose a new framework of belief over Indian spirituality, and Smith's remark that Thorp "would have had all the rest guelt, to make them milder" (Smith 295) suggests a degree of sexual control as well. Thorp also built a house for the King, that is Opitchipan, in fact superimposing European housing patterns over Native American ones. The mutilation of Thorp's body represents a total rejection of this benevolent father figure. Whereas the "circular stimulation" originates from Opechancanaugh, a person committed to fight the English intruders throughout his life, Blumer (1934), and LeBon's (1896) concept of the irrational and instinctual behavior of crowds (in Brinkerhoff–White 557) cannot properly describe the events of 1622. On the other hand, the attack resulted from precise planning and careful weighing of one's options enabling the contagion theory to offer only a partial explanation.

The convergence theory's assertion that crowds are made up by like-minded individuals "selectively drawn" (Brinkerhoff–White 558) towards an objective further highlights the significance of the synchronized timing and simultaneous execution of the attack plans. The previously mentioned common set of predispositions entailed the hatred of English settlers, and the desire for revenge. Having applied the resource mobilization theory to the events, in case of the Jamestown Massacre the resources in question are faith, land, and culture. The Jamestown Massacre appears to meet the requirements of a violent social movement as well, that is it was indeed "an ongoing

goal directed effort" to change social institutions from the outside. Whereas the existence of a definite social structure is debatable, the intensity of the organization of the Indians in fact corresponds to an indigenous social movement reaching the white level stage of the mobilization process (Lofland 1979) demonstrating that all members of the organization are fully dedicated to the movement and the resources and the number of members expand dramatically (Brinkerhoff–Whte 568). Also Opechancanaugh's organizing efforts can be labeled as micro-mobilization, a process in which frame alignment takes place during which the prospective members of the movement "are convinced that their interests, values, and beliefs are complementary to those of the social movement organization" (Brinkerhoff–White 568). Moreover, within the frame alignment process, frame amplification can be discerned during which a structure is given to previously unfocused dissatisfaction (Snow et al qtd. in Brinkerhoff–White 569) singling out the settlers as the cause of the Indians' suffering.

Treating the attack as an early form of terrorism, several theories or models are at the researcher's disposal. There are two basic categories within this approach, precipitants, or events that led to the outbreak of violence and preconditions, or factors that allow the participants to start the terrorist action and violence. The death of Nemmattanow, or Jack the Feathers would serve as the precipitant and the cultural deterritorialization of the Indians, the white encroachment on Native American land and the religious expansionism of the English serve as the main preconditions. According to Chalmers Johnson (1978) and Martha Crenshaw (1981) the preconditions can be further subdivided into permissive factors promoting the terrorist action or making it the only attractive option, and direct situational factors that function as the main motivators for violence. The permissive factors include such components as transportation systems, weapon availability, communication capabilities and lack of security measures. (Hudson http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/frd/) In case of the Jamestown Massacre the Indians took advantage of the rudimentary transportation capabilities of the settlers by borrowing their boats, they had a limited weapon availability manifested by the usage of tools and utensils in the perpetration of the violent acts and demonstrated excellent commun-

ication skills by arranging the attack. The fact that the settlers moved far from each other compromised their security in addition to displaying a rather relaxed attitude concerning the protection of the colony. The looming loss of Indian land, traditional life style and spirituality functioned as direct situational factors.

Following Crenshaw's organizational approach model holding that acts of terrorism are committed by groups who reach collective decisions via commonly held or shared beliefs while the degree of individual commitment to the group's objective varies, the divergent intensity of the killing and brutality can be examined (Hudson http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/frd/). Smith reporting on the escape of such settlers as Nathaniel Causie, "they hurt not any that did either fight or stand upon their guard" (295) reinforces the varying intensity of individual commitment to the goals outlined by Opechancanaugh. The commonly held belief is the enemy image of the settlers, the random acts of violence demonstrate the diverse degree of commitment to group objectives. According to David G. Hubbard's physiological approach terrorist acts can be regarded as a "stereotyped, agitated, tissue response to stress" (Hudson http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/frd/) making Opechancanaugh's actions qualify as a response to the stress brought on by the threat of cultural dislocation. Hubbard also points out the defining role of the *fight or flight syndrome*, an experience Opechancanaugh definitely had undergone in the rough treatment suffered in the hands of John Smith previously.

One of the most interesting research tools is provided by the psychological approach. Three hypotheses appear to be applicable in this case. Ted Robert Gurr's (1970) and J. C. Davies' (1973) Frustration-Aggression hypothesis holds that violence is caused by the so-called revolution of rising expectations, or a gap between increasing demands and need satisfaction (Hudson http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/frd/). The fact that the relationship between the Indians and settlers in Jamestown appeared peaceful in the surface increased the Indians' expectation for fair and dignified treatment and created an expectation gap, eventually leading to the violence. Inspired by Erikson, Jeanne N. Knutson elaborated a Negative Identity hypothesis suggesting a "vindictive rejection of a role regarded as desirable and proper by an individual's family and community"

(Hudson http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/frd/). Openchancanaugh's past sheds light at the sources of the formation of the Negative Identity, as he was always compelled into a secondary role, first the planned execution of John Smith was frustrated by Pocahontas' intervention, second he was not able to acquire the supreme command of the tribe, forced to play second fiddle behind Powhatan, later Opitchipan. Masterminding the brutal attack in fact goes against the tribe's primary policy of maintaining peaceful relations with the settlers. According to Jerrold M. Post, John W. Crayton, and Richard M. Pearlstein's Narcissistic Rage hypothesis terrorist acts, or the proclivity to such violence can be motivated by the presence of the "Grandiose Self" resulting in sociopath, arrogant behavior. Narcissistic injury can lead to a rage aiming at the elimination of the source of the former (Hudson http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/frd/). In case of Opechancanaugh being ambushed and battered by John Smith qualifies as a narcissistic injury. According to Post the Grandiose Self operates the psychological mechanism of splitting as a narcissistic injury results in a damaged self, in fact a split self, a dual model of *me and not me* thereby externalizing the less desirable latter part and blaming the enemy. Eric D. Shaw's Personal Pathway Model (1986:365) (Hudson http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/frd/) can also be helpful. This tripartite structure including early socialization, narcissistic injury and escalatory event can explain Opechancanaugh's progress to violence. The planned execution of John Smith testifies to a violent social environment in childhood and early adulthood, the ambush by Smith later functions as the narcissistic injury and the increasing cultural deterritorialization of Amerindians along with the death of Jack the Feathers operate as an escalatory event.

Konrad Lorenz's theory on communal aggression or military enthusiasm appears to be relevant as well. According to his four part theory military enthusiasm is preconditioned on the presence of the following factors: a threatened social unit, the existence of the respective threat, the presence of an inspiring figure, and the occurrence of many individuals agitated by the same emotion (397–398) The first requirement is met by the looming cultural deterritorialization of the Amerindians, the coexistence of settlers and Indians on the same land or in the same area satisfies the second

condition, the charismatic determination of Opechancanaugh qualifies him as an inspiring leader, and it is beyond doubt that the hatred of the whites and the rejection of their cultural and religious expansion fired up the participants in the attack on Jamestown.

The rational actor model elaborated by Davidson and Lytle (172) holds that historical characters' actions result from weighing several options and subsequently choosing the most effective ones. Consequently, individuals behave rationally and as a result of an internal cost and benefit analysis they select the most effective method to reach their goals with the least possible effort (172). The application of the rational actor model of course in only possible to the individual actions of Opechancanaugh. His goal, as demonstrated by a lifelong determination, is to drive out the settlers seen as foreign invaders. The options at his disposal were a full frontal attack, guerilla warfare, or sporadic violence. The fact that he chose the surprise attack method is one example of the thinking of the rational actor. The Indians used the surprise or ambush method to counterbalance an obvious military and technological inferiority, and to inflict psychological damage in addition to a military strike. The fact that the settlers were attacked in their homes planted the seeds of insecurity and weakened the psychological foundation of the settlement for good. The availability of weapons for the attackers was also limited, as they had to resort to using utensils and tools. The brutality in fact is calculated to strike terror into the hearts of the settlers. Opechancanaugh also had to find an effective answer to the aggressive religious expansionism of the colonists. The available options entailed an array of peaceful and violent solutions including the "re-education" of Indians via the refutation of the teaching of Christian missionaries, negotiations with the colonists to reduce the intensity of the conversion efforts, and using force to eliminate the source of the attacks on Native American spirituality. The effectiveness of the first option, however, was frustrated by the Indians' acceptance of Christianity. Smith reports that the King of the Indians confessed to Master George Thorp that the white settlers' God was "better than theirs" (295), also one could point to Chanco, a converted Indian, whose eventual warning to the settlers helped to avoid a greater loss of human life during the Massacre. Furthermore, Opechancanaugh's

determination to drive out the settlers precluded the use of negotiations to achieve his goals. The question, whether the massacre of 347 settlers, roughly 1/5 of the population of the colony (Davidson 51) could be considered a success, however, inevitably emerges. While the settlers suffered a considerable setback, and the revocation of Virginia's charter in 1624 was partially justified by the Jamestown Massacre for "the colony hath not hitherto prospered so happily as was hoped and desired" (Douglas 235), the revenge campaign or the Second Anglo-Powhatan War (1622–1632) brought a tragic defeat to the Amerindian population (Fausz 69).

The Jamestown Massacre can be seen as a violent clash of bodies, thereby facilitating the relevance of Merleau-Ponty and Althusser's theories. Following Merleau-Ponty, the body is represented by a system of double helixes forming an incomplete loop consisting of two images: intercorporeality, that is being a thing among things, and the body's perception of itself. Althusser's theory of interpellation, that is the introduction of the self into the social order, explains how the self becomes a social subject (Doyle 342–44). In case of an interpellated person, enjoying the fruits of the acquisition of the social self the two helixes are not in conflict with each other, that is the image of the respective self corresponds to the image held by society. While Opechancanaugh's double helix contains the corporeal component of an Amerindian and his perception of himself as a warrior, he is seen by white society as a bloodthirsty savage and his interpellation process. is prevented and frustrated. Consequently, attacking the settlers, the beholders and generators of such negative images, can be interpreted as an interpellation, or the superimposition of one helix over another. Opechancanaugh's double helix is juxtaposed to the colonists' epistemological model of *immigrants of European, primary British stock and individuals on a mission to promote the "Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and Honour of King and Country*" (Urofsky 12). One of the primary causes of the attack on Jamestown is the Indians' rejection of the colonists' perception of the self. In fact from the competing self-images, temporarily the Indian image of the *defender of Native American culture* emerges victoriously. The *Amerindian-warrior* double helix eliminates the "*messenger of European culture*"

component of the settlers' identity and emerges a new pattern entailing such concepts as *the Amerindian-warrior-defender of Native American culture and eliminator of a foreign culture* The superimposition of Opechancanaugh's helix onto his victim, or by extension a multiple imposition of Native American helixes on the settlers' in fact eradicates the creator or source of the negative image. Thus a certain form of cultural projection is achieved, which following Merelman, does not call on the Amerindian community "to place new images of itself before other social groups or the general public (3)," but eliminates the very proponent of the negative image. Therefore, it can be concluded that the primary goal of the Jamestown Massacre was not the removal of the settlers, but the reconstruction of the Native American self shattered by the threat of cultural dislocation and negative stereotyping.

The massacre can also be seen as another episode of a virtual duel and rivalry between Smith and Opechancanaugh as the fate of these two historical figures intersected earlier. Smith was captured by Opechancanaugh and it was largely at his behest that the English adventurer had been sentenced to death. Smith's brutality toward Opechancanaugh during trade negotiations following their first encounter signifies retaliation for the previous humiliation. Consequently, the Jamestown Massacre can be seen as a response to Opechancanaugh's ordeal and Smith's reporting on the events figuratively condemns his Native American counterpart. In describing their first encounter Smith refers to Opechancanough as the King of Pamunkey to whom he gives an ivory double compass dial representing the globe. In fact similarly to Columbus' encounter with the natives, a cultural exchange takes place as both participants offer certain artifacts or elements of their culture. By presenting the globe to Opechancanaugh Smith implies the very possession of the world in which the Powhatan Indians live. The Indians return the favor with the offer of food and the subsequent threats to Smith's life. Both of these acts are subconsciously designed to fight against the notion of the settlers' superiority, The offer of food represents the wealth of the land which the settlers have not been able to enjoy fully, the eventual death sentence passed on to Smith amounts to a reclaiming of the dominant status in the Indian-colonist relationship. Also in Smith's

description of this treatment in the hands of the Indians it is noteworthy that he was always feasted before attempts at his life were made. Having been transferred from Opechancanaugh's custody he is taken to Orapak, where he is fed, than he is almost killed by an Indian planning to revenge his son. Furthermore, he is also invited to the house of Opitchipan and fed "many platters of bread, fowl, and wild beasts" (19). This episode is soon to be followed by Powhatan's execution order. Therefore it can be concluded that the method employed during the Jamestown Massacre, while at first appears to be treacherous, in fact is rooted in the Powhatan tradition of feasting the victim, or having a meal with him before execution. Thus the Jamestown Massacre seen from the victim's point of view as a treacherous attack, can be considered from the angle of Native Americans a form of cultural projection.

III

Whereas the research objective outlined at the beginning of this paper included the performance of a multifaceted examination of a historical event, due to a lack of reliable historical reporting and sources, the researcher has waded onto the territory of myths and has been confronted with several questions. The approach utilized during the writing of this paper treated the Jamestown Massacre both as a collective action and as a brainchild of an individual. The first difficulty encountered is the categorization of the respective events as in the mechanism and inner dynamic of the attack elements of riots, social movements and terrorist violence are discernible. The crux of the researcher's argument is that the Jamestown Massacre is a violent collective action, thus sociological and psychological theories relevant to riots and terrorist acts are applicable in this case. As it was mentioned at the beginning of the paper the primary purpose was not the actual examination of the events, but revealing the underlying sociological, psychological, and epistemological processes. Consequently the paper employed a dual level model. On the collective action level the sociological explanations, Lorenz's aggression theory and Chalmers-Crenshaw's organizational approach to terrorism are located, while the rational actor, the psychological and physiological explanations of terrorism along with Merleau- Ponty

and Althusser's theories are functional at the individual level. The Jamestown Massacre is not simply a violent act or the beginning of America's wars, but a form of a cultural projection aimed at a dual audience, the Native American community and the white settlers. In the first direction it functions as culture protection and in the second as culture elimination. Taking Coronil's notion of culture as producing the Self and the Other (qtd. in Turner 418), it is clearly an attempt at Othering the settlers and healing the injured Native American self. The Massacre either treated as a riot, collective action, or terrorist attack, in the final accounting reinforces the Native American self as the relevant explanations and theories all emphasize group cohesion singling out the colonists as hostile to the interests of the victimized Powhatan Indians.

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GABRIELLA VARRÓ

THE ADVENTURES OF THE MINSTREL SIGN IN MARK TWAIN'S *HUCKLEBERRY FINN*

I remember the first negro musical show I ever saw. It must have been in the early forties. It was a new institution. In our village of Hannibal we had not heard of it before and it burst upon us as a glad and stunning surprise.

The show remained a week and gave a performance every night. Church members didn't attend these performances, but all the worldlings flocked to them and were enchanted. Church members didn't attend shows out there in those days. The minstrels appeared with coal-black hands and faces and their clothing was a loud and extravagant burlesque of the clothing worn by the plantation slave of the time; not that the rags of the poor slave were burlesqued, for that would not have been possible; burlesque could have added nothing in the way of extravagance to the sorrowful accumulation of rags and patches which constituted his costume; it was the form and color of his dress that was burlesqued. [...] The minstrel used a very broad negro dialect; he used it competently and with easy facility and it was funny—delightfully and satisfyingly funny. (*Autobiography* 59)

Mark Twain was a great fan and admirer of the minstrel shows, and he himself attended many performances in and around Hannibal and St. Louis, Missouri. In his *Autobiography* he gave several accounts of the elevating experience provided by the shows, and his firm belief that blackface entertainment was one of the most perfect forms of humor remained his conviction throughout his life. Once he even persuaded his mother and aunt to accompany him to the theatre. He

told them, however, that missionaries who had just returned from Africa were to lecture on African music. The respective section of the *Autobiography* reads as follows: "When the grotesque negroes came filing out on the stage in their extravagant costumes, the old ladies were almost speechless with astonishment. I explained to them that the missionaries always dressed like that in Africa. But Aunt Betsy said, reproachfully, 'But they're niggers'" (62).

The two previous citations from Twain's *Autobiography* are remarkable for several reasons. The first one demonstrates how, on the one hand, Twain is totally captivated by the humor of the minstrel show, and, on the other, the somewhat apologetic tone assumed in the name of the white performers for the not completely adequate parody exercised on the stage. The first quotation clearly proves that Twain describes the blackface act not as an outsider, but more as a professional humorist who lives within and becomes one with this strange, enigmatic and complex world that the show is. This explains why Twain understands blackface's rituals and strategies more than an average outsider would. Mixed into the account are feelings of uncertainty, guilt, admiration and ecstasy, which reflect ambiguities that are not exclusively the author's but inherent in the blackface act as well. The ambivalent psychological processes revealed in the passage also attest to complexities and ambivalences regarding the relationships between the minstrel performer and the object of his impersonation (the slaves), those between the spectators and the performance (the blackface act), the spectators and the black ethnic group, and finally the minstrel performers and their spectators. It can be thus hypothesized that Twain's own complex feelings indirectly reflect the underlying psychological processes of the blackface performance itself.

The point of interest in the second quotation is that in it Twain widens the scope of parody to include minstrel audiences along with the Negroes parodied on stage. Back in the 19th century there were many people who mistakenly identified the blackface stage entertainers with blacks, and likewise the contents, the narrative elements of the shows were often decoded as authentic features of black existence. In the scene described Twain is amused as much by the minstrel performers as by his relatives, especially as he witnesses

their consternation at the sight of stage Negroes, whereas in real life the ladies were in daily contact with blacks. To the women the appearance of the Negro on stage is inappropriate and inadequate, this is not the "natural" environment where they should appear, and hence the shock. Comedy arises from the complete failure of previous expectations pertaining to the performance, the missionaries are replaced by "Negroes" (in the lady's interpretation at least), the Negroes are in reality white performers in blackface, and light-hearted entertainment is thus overridden by indignation. Twain's meditation about the scene, however, is not constructed along the authenticity-inauthenticity dichotomy—he is not interested in whether the audience is capable of recognizing the true identity of the performers—instead he is testing the reactions of white audiences with respect to the Negroes as incarnated through white impersonation.

In a sense the two quotations might very well be conceived as a summary of Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. On the one hand, the novel charts the attraction-resistance dichotomy between blacks and whites, which also simulates the rhythmic shifts in the ambivalent psychology of blackface performance (see the quotation used as the epigraph). On the other hand, Twain is deeply interested in how typical the emotional and ethical responses of various social classes (upper, middle and lower) to blacks really are (cf. the second quotation). The latent question that seems to be formulated throughout the entire novel cycle is whether there is any development possible in inter-racial, inter-ethnic communication within certain social groups.[1]

Twain's curious attraction to the minstrel show can be explained in many ways, but first among these possible arguments is one closely tied to the author's aesthetic mission. Namely that Twain, being, among other things, an ardent promoter of a truly national vernacular,

[1] It is a surprising coincidence that current minstrelsy criticism (similarly to emphasis laid out by Twain's writings) is also intent on moving away from the authenticity-inauthenticity dilemma with respect to black representation, primarily since this has always been regarded as a politically sensitive issue, and secondly because this area of debate contains a multitude of subjective elements. Contemporary minstrelsy criticism also stresses the research of interrelations between the minstrel shows and various social classes, while underscoring the significance of political alliances across class and ethnic boundaries revealed in the contents of the shows.

believed to have found the genuinely American cultural idiom and diction in the minstrel tradition, on the basis of which he considered the formation of national identity and consciousness feasible. It is a different matter, however, that this form of popular theatre appeared in a racist mould (where Negroes were deliberately humiliated and subjugated) at least according to traditional interpretations, similarly to the southwestern branch of national humor popularized by Twain, that also abounded in jokes at the black man's expense. Minstrel shows frequently used the elements of regional humor as their source material, and the genres of southwestern humor also oftentimes surfaced in minstrel programs. Among the characteristic features of southwestern humor were "incongruity, gross exaggeration, understatement, caricature, anecdotes" (Bell 129), tall tales and further elements, which came to be part of the aesthetic apparatus applied in the portrayal of black people when transferred into the minstrel shows. These facts by themselves, however, do not prove,—what is nonetheless affirmed by many critics—, that Twain turned to the minstrel tradition exclusively because of its racist charge. It is altogether more likely that Twain was driven to the blackface show primarily because it meant for him the first originally American popular tradition (irrespective of the image it drew of blacks), and this very well matched the writer's cultural mission. An additional factor worth mentioning here is that liberating, inter-ethnic aspect of the minstrel show which is being described in minstrelsy criticism only recently—and in its core also appearing in Twain's art—, and which might lead to reinterpretations regarding the former, exclusively condemnatory evaluations of the shows.

The second element that may have played a part in Twain's patronage of the minstrel theatre throughout his life was his upbringing. In the *Autobiography* Twain mentions the fact that since in the region where he grew up there were no stories of atrocities involving slaves, he received no input from his immediate surroundings that could have suggested even in the smallest degree the necessary rejection of slavery. This paternalistic attitude and the similarly pseudo-benevolent attitude revealed on the minstrel stages with respect to the social position of blacks show many similarities. "[...] [T]here was nothing about the slavery of the Hannibal region to

arouse one's dozing humane instincts to activity. It was the mild domestic slavery, not the brutal plantation article. Cruelties were very rare and exceedingly and wholesomely unpopular" —, writes Twain in his *Autobiography* (30). This might be the reason why, reflected through Huck Finn's great moral dilemmas regarding the acknowledgement of Jim's humanity and his natural right for freedom, we indeed witness Twain's innate humanism and his received paternalistic Southern perspective battling against each other.

In this brief analysis of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, I will attempt to find answers to the following questions. [1.] To what extent and at what points can we see the intervention of the minstrel tradition in Twain's authorial world? [2.] What is the result of the fact that Twain lived inside the world of the minstrel shows, and was familiar with the strategies, methods, and world view applied therein? [3.] Does Twain provide an evaluation or interpretation for the posterity with respect to this theatrical tradition that he knew so well? [4.] Does his interpretation ever reach the level of criticism, and if so, can he present it objectively?

Let us first take a closer look at those elements of blackface which are incorporated into the novel, and examine how Twain applies these in the construction of his tale. *Huck Finn*, which Twain wrote through almost a decade with intermissions, was published in 1884. This was the age when the "Negro" minstrel show reached the peak of its popularity in America. By the 1870s minstrel companies had achieved unequalled success, and were touring the entire country. "Meanwhile," as Eric Lott noted, "the new phenomenon of the "Tom show"—dramatic blackface productions of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* [...]—was emerging to displace and reorient the minstrel tradition" (129). The entire American nation was captivated and spellbound by the minstrel shows. Thus it is no surprise that Twain's text is also interwoven by the expressions, social and cultural vision disseminated by the shows. Anthony Berret, for instance, interprets the novel's thematic layers, style and strategies as well as its entire structure as being affected by the minstrel influence. The hypothesis, namely that the novel is constructed along the tripartite arrangement of the classic minstrel show, will be demonstrated here

partly following Berret's interpretation and argument, and partly through examples directly from the text.

It is a well known fact that the classic minstrel show was comprised of three easily distinguishable units, namely, the first part, the olio, and the closing number. These larger units could be subdivided into yet smaller segments. The first part, or *overture*, contained primarily comic dialogues and sentimental song and dance acts; the *olio* or variety section centered around the stump speech of the lead actor and a variety of acrobatic or circus numbers, and finally the *closing* was organized around a plantation skit or one or more burlesque numbers. This wide range of genres and themes belonging to the shows can also be found in Twain's work.

A recurring element of the tripartite minstrel performance was the humorous dialogue scene of the overture. In the original minstrel setting the parties involved in this scene were, on the one hand, the white-faced *Interlocutor*, who acted as Master of Ceremony throughout the performance, and the blackfaced darkies (*Mr Tambo* and *Mr. Bones*, otherwise also known as the *endmen*), who were seated at both ends of the semicircular stage-set along with the contributing dancers and musicians. These comic dialogues were exploiting the possibilities of verbal humor. Among the devices of verbal humor were the so-called *banter*, the teasing and mocking of each other, as well as the *repartee*, which built upon the practice of fast and ingenious remarks like in a verbal duel. The respective criticism often labels this kind of comic element as *end-man humor* (Starke 175), mostly because these fast exchanges were routinely exercised by the endmen.

The above stylistic features are as much perceptible in the humor and incongruity generating tricks and devices of the group called the Literary Comedians, who were Twain's contemporaries, as in the later Donald and Costello shows, or still later in Amos 'n Andy, as well as in the improvisational technique of the gag shows.

Similarly, *Huck Finn* also abounds in the possibly most popular comedy-generating technique of the minstrel shows, the *end-man humor*. Let us now take a look at some instances where this comic device can be unmistakably pinpointed as present in the book. The most striking example of the employment of the *end-man humor*

probably is Chapter 14, where Jim and Huck first begin to talk about some very illustrious people, and then they exchange ideas about the wisdom of the Biblical King Solomon, and finally they debate about the strange language of French people:

> I read considerable to Jim about kings, and dukes, and earls, and such, and how gaudy they dressed, and how much style they put on, and called each other your majesty, and your grace, and your lordship, and so on, 'stead of mister; and Jim's eyes bugged out, and he was interested. He says:
> 'I didn' know dey was so many un um. I hain't hearn 'bout none un um, skasely, but ole King Sollermun, onless you counts dem kings dat's in a pack er k'yards. How much do a king get?'
> 'Get?' I says; 'why, they get a thousand dollars a month if they want it; they can have just as much as they want; everything belongs to them.'
> '*Ain*' dat gay? En what dey got to do, Huck?
> '*They* don't do nothing! Why how you talk. They just set around.'
> 'No—is dat so?'
> 'Of course it is. They just set around. Except maybe when there's a war; then they go to the war. But other times they just lazy around; or go hawking—just hawking and [...] and other times, when things is dull, they fuss with the parlyment; and if everybody don't go just so he whacks their heads of. But mostly they hang round the harem.' (84–85)

This is where the dialogue between Huck and Jim shifts to the wise King Solomon theme. We are informed that Solomon "had about a million wives" in his harem, and that the harem itself is a "bo'd'n-house," Jim claims, and it is rather noisy, mostly because "de wives quarrels considerable." Still Solomon is said to be the wisest man on earth, although he lived at such a noisy place. "I doan' take no stock in dat," says Jim, "Bekase why: would a wise man want to live in the mids' er sich a blimblammin' all de time?" (85)

> 'Well, but he *was* the wisest man, anyway; because the widow she told me so, her own self.'
> 'I doan k'yer what de widder say, he *warn't* no wise man, nuther. He had some er de ded-fetchedes' ways I ever see. Does you know 'bout dat chile dat he 'uz gwyne to chop in two?'
> '*Yes, the widow told me all about it.*'
> 'Well, *den! Warn' dat de beatenes' notion in de worl'? You jes' take en look at it a minute. [...]*

'But hang it, Jim, you've clean missed the point—blame it, you've missed it a thousand mile.'
'Who? Me? Go 'long. Doan' talk to *me* 'bout yo' pints. I reck'n I know sense when I sees it; en dey ain' no sense in sich doin's as dat. De 'spute warn't 'bout a half chile, de 'spute was 'bout a whole child; en de man dat thinks he kin settle a 'spute 'bout a whole child wid half a chile, doan' know enough to come in out'n de rain. Doan' talk to me 'bout Sollermun, Huck, I knows him by de back.'
'But I tell you you don't get the point.'
'Blame de pint! I reck'n I knows what I knows. En mine you, de *real* pint is down furder—it's down deeper. It lays in de way Sollermun was raised. You take a man dat's got on'y one or two chillen; is dat man gwyne to be waseful o' chillen? No, he ain't; he can't 'ford it. *He* know how to value 'em. But you take a man 'dat's got 'bout five million chillen runnin' roun' de house, en it's diffunt. *He* as soon chop a chile in two as a cat. Dey's plenty mo'. A chile er two, mo' er less, warn't no consekens to Sollermun, dad fetch him!' (86–87)

Huck gives up the verbal duel, because he is not able to get the upper hand over Jim's humorously intensive ethical indignation. As he says immediately afterwards: "I never see such a nigger. If he got a notion in his head once, there warn't no getting it out again" (86). Huck then seeks a new theme for discussion, and they start to converse about Louis XVI, the French king who was executed, and his son, the heir, who stayed alive according to the legend and fled to America. But, asks Jim, what would a king do in America, where there are no sovereigns. "Well," says Huck, "I don't know. Some of them gets on the police, and some of them learns people how to talk French" (87). This is the point where Twain begins one of his best dialogues that reflects all the magic of oral improvisation. This section with its fast rhythm, cunning exchanges, and bizarre logic is a masterful verbal simulation of the end-man humor of the minstrel show.

'Why, Huck, doan' de French people talk de same way we does?'
'*No*, Jim; you couldn't understand a word they said—not a single word.'
'Well, now, I be ding-busted! How do dat come?'
"I don't know; but it's so. I got some of their jabber out of a book. Spose a man was to come to you and say *Polly-voo-franzy*—what would you think?'

'I wouldn't think nuff'n; I'd take en bust him over de head. Dat is, if he warn't white. I wouldn't 'low no nigger to call me dat.'
'Sucks, it ain't calling you anything. It's only saying do you know how to talk French.
'Well, den, why couldn't he *say* it?'
'Why, he *is* a-saying it. That's a Frenchman's *way* of saying do you know how to talk French.'
'Well, it's a blame' ridicklous way, en I doan' want to hear no mo' 'bout it. Dey ain' no sense in it.'
'Looky here, Jim; does a cat talk like we do?'
'No, a cat don't.'
'Well, does a cow?'
'No, a cow don't, nuther.'
'Does a cat talk like a cow, or a cow talk like a cat?'
'No, dey don't.'
'It's natural and right for 'em to talk different from each other, ain't it?'
''Course.'
'And ain't it natural and right for a cat and a cow to talk different from *us*?' [...] Well, then, why ain't it natural and right for a *Frenchman* to talk different from us? You answer me that.'
'Is a cat a man, Huck?'
'No.'
'Well, den, dey ain't no sense in a cat talkin' like a man. Is a cow a man?—er is a cow a cat?'
'No, she ain't either of them'
[...] 'Is a Frenchman a man?'
'Yes.'
'*Well*, den! Dad blame it, why doan he *talk* like a man? You answer me *dat*. (87–88)

According to Berret the section of the novel that matches the minstrel first part or overture are chapters 1 to 19. As can be seen from the examples cited above, Jim plays the role of the minstrel end-man here, while in the dialogues between Huck and Jim, Huck is acting as the Master of Ceremony, or the minstrel Interlocutor.[2] Befitting the minstrel tradition Jim is the comic end-man, who is characterized by his uneducated speech, he is inexperienced in the matters of life, and therefore can easily be cheated or tricked. In contrast to him, Huck attempts to speak in a more polished language,

[2] In the conversations with others, however, like Miss Watson or the widow, Huck appears as the minstrel end-man (Berret 41).

and at times we even have the feeling that he is showing off his knowledge. Still, as can also be witnessed in the minstrel dialogues, Jim, with his twisted logic, often gets the better of the "Interlocutor," i.e. Huck. Running short of counter-arguments the white boy has no choice but to retreat at the end of the verbal duel quoted above. As the end-man has the last words in the conversation, the "battle" is clearly decided in his favor.

Similarly to the minstrel show audiences, who depending on their class affiliations—the lower classes taking the part of the weaker characters—frequently changed loyalties, shifting from one to the other side in the respective debates, the reader's sympathies also tend to change. At times we feel for Jim, because we see that he is defenseless against Huck's pretentious intellectual superiority, and at other times we feel Huck's pseudo-scientific, yet, often self-contradictory and entangled arguments, providing a mixture of facts and details to be close to us. The same double-edged parody was also the source of the minstrel show's great popularity, where upper classes could freely laugh together with the Interlocutor (here impersonated by Huck) at the clumsiness of the Darkies, while the lower classes (especially the northern working class members of the audience) could delight themselves at their will at the expense of the occasional mistakes, or enforced rationalism of Mr. Interlocutor, who always failed in opposition to the resourceful folk wisdom of the Darkies.[3] As Berret puts it, "Like the best comic dialogues of the minstrel shows" the dialogues between Huck and Jim simultaneously parody and celebrate "a display of social superiority" (40). Thus Twain pillories the contradictory notions of his middle-class audience as well, who demanded "social equality and upward mobility" (Berret 40) under the same breath.[4]

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[3] It is very important that Huck is able to play the upper hand only with respect to Jim, whereas in his other relationships he is degraded to the level of the Darkies. This strikingly illustrates the contingency of social positions, as well as the fact that these social layers are by themselves meaningless without the support of true ethical contents.

[4] An additional note that should be included here is that while Twain was on a lecture tour of the country in 1882 in the company of George Washington Cable, Joel Chandler Harris, and other established writers, he got the idea to give appearances in a minstrel style. At these occasions Twain played the end-man, and

Another favorite device of the minstrel overture besides the comic dialogues was the sentimental song cycle, which in the original minstrel shows served to introduce the stars of the company, who were later to return to the stage during the subsequent parts of the show. Although Berret cites the song of the Grangerford ladies, "The Last Link is Broken" to demonstrate the presence of sentimentalism in the novel, it can be added that the entire environment of the Grangerfords, the wall paintings, the poems of Emmeline, or the resigned reception of the unavoidability of the vendetta between the two families are also part of the same style. Moreover, the rhythmic separations and unions between Huck and Jim, probably capture the true emotional contents of sentimentalism more than any other element in the novel. A concrete example of the separation-union theme occurs when, in Chapter 15, Huck and Jim lose each other in the fog, and they shout to find one another through an entire day without any luck, only to be reunited finally and each overjoyed at the sight of the other. This section of the book is often cited, because it is in this scene that Huck suddenly becomes aware of Jim's deeply human emotions. When Huck attempts to fool Jim, stating that the latter only dreamt their separation, Jim is profoundly shattered, since Huck was the last person he thought would attempt to mock him so. Jim's humanity is probably at the highest peak at this point in the novel.[5]

In the section of the novel that matches the minstrel olio, there are a number of burlesque skits, parodies, and sensational happenings. This part is dominated by the stunts, pranks and solo numbers of the duke and the king, like the anecdotes of their noble origins, the stump sermon about temperance, the perfectly twisted Shakespeare monologue, or the Royal Nonesuch performance. In this variety

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Cable took the part of Mr. Interlocutor. It can thus be indirectly assumed that Twain felt closer to the Darky role, the traditionally lower class part, than to the pompous style of Mr. Interlocutor, who was usually despised by the masses. (Lott 134).

[5] Some critics claim that even in Chapter 15—and generally in the sections which narrate the unifications between Huck and Jim—Jim is unable to step out of the minstrel cliche. Woodward, for instance, argues that in these episodes Jim resembles a mammy stereotype, since his behavior is characterized by exaggerated feelings of caring and protectiveness (146).

section of the novel cliches referring to theatricality predominate, for instance, the Boggs and Sherburn duel in Chapter 21 seems perfectly choreographed, Jim is dressed up as King Lear not to be captured, moreover, in Chapter 22, Huck attends a real circus performance. Likewise, Huck's narrative on Henry VIII in Chapter 23 evokes the practice of minstrel stump speeches (applied as a central attraction of the minstrel olio), mixing up various historical facts, ages and personalities.

> "Ring Up Fair Rosamund." Fair Rosamund answers the bell. Next morning, "Chop off her head." And he made every one of them tell him a tale every night; and he kept that up till he had hogged a thousand and one tales that way, and then he put them all in a book, and called it Domesday Book—which was a good name and stated the case. [...] Well, Henry he takes a notion he wants to get up some trouble with this country. How does he go at it—give notice?—give the country a show? No. All of a sudden he heaves all the tea in Boston Harbor overload, and whacks out a declaration of independence, and dares them to come on. (169)

The underlying psychological tensions of blackface performance are strikingly evoked in this section as well. The most vivid example of this is the scene in which the duke dresses Jim up in King Lear's outfit, and paints his face in blue paint (chapter 24). Regarding Twain's image of blacks some critics draw the conclusion from this scene that here once again Jim plays the white man's clown, and triggers laughter from the audience by the humiliation of himself. It is more likely, however, that we gain an insider's look into the psychological process of the white blackface delineator here. The whole ritual is very much like a minstrel act in reverse, since this time it is the black man's face which is covered with paint, and the black paint of the minstrel stage is turned into a death mask. Yet, in Jim's blue face we recognize not the Negro's, but the blackface entertainer's deathly glance, who shatters the essence of his own identity behind the mask; his death being the curious resurrection of the black man. The spiritual torments of the masquerade are represented through Jim's prearranged mad outcries in the respective scene.

> Meanwhile Twain is talking both to and about his audiences. The snobbery of the masses is well illustrated by the fact that they automatically favor the upper classes as it is demonstrated in the

> plays staged by the duke and the king, or in the Wilks episode. By the time their doings are finally exposed, the two frauds have deceived the people who live along the Mississippi shore several times. Thus, while Twain follows the structural units apparently scripted by the minstrel show, he also exposes the larger culture, and those democratic ideals which are but empty poses. Interestingly, however, Jim's masquerade in blue and the episodes exposing snobbery reveal the same deeper social tension, identified by Twain as the curse of the entire American society: that is, the contradiction between democratic ideals and the actual social ideals realized.

The minstrel third part usually consisted of a short scene about the life of a Southern plantation, a one-act burlesque, or the parody of a well-known play. According to Berret, the third section of the novel from Chapter 32 to the end corresponds to the minstrel third part (44). Berret emphasizes the motifs of the peaceful, happy home, the undisturbed, quiet working days, and the cohesion within the family at the Phelps farm, as being characteristic minstrel cliches traditionally formulated by the average minstrel finale. As Berret claims, "[t]his scene contains all the elements that made the minstrel shows appealing to the urban and industrial audiences of the North [...]" (44), since their nostalgia towards the peace of country life gained free expression there. The true burlesque scene, however, comes when Huck and Tom persuade Jim to act out the escape from captivity. Many critics blamed Twain for the fact that after Jim's humanity gradually strengthened in the novel, it was most probably a mistake to annul this development with a single stroke of the pen. As the argument goes, in the scenes of the Phelps farm, Jim is once again the same naive, comical clown figure that he used to be at the very beginning of the story.

Since Twain wrote the novel through seven years, exactly between 1876 and 1883, some analysts suspected that the narrative reflected the changes that occurred during this period in the author's private life. More precisely, Twain's marriage to Olivia Langdon, and their moving to Hartford, Connecticut, might have been of serious consequence to the writer's thinking, especially because the relatives of the new wife, as well as her aristocratic circle of friends diverted Twain from his standard audiences, the lower and middle classes. In spite of this, it is not very likely that the concluding episodes and its burlesque Negro character fashioned after the minstrel tradition reflect

the influence of the writer's new environment. It is altogether more believable that Twain intentionally takes his material through the structural stages of a minstrel show. If we read the novel in this fashion, the ending appears to be a confused parade of diverse motifs that correspond to the choreography of minstrel shows perfectly.

Twain thus seemingly adjusts his novel to the structure of the minstrel show. This, however, does not mean that he fails to draw upon other source materials in his narrative. In connection with *Huckleberry Finn* many critics identify, for instance, the presence of certain motifs from Afro-American folklore and oral tradition, and it was probably Shelley Fisher Fishkin who argued the case most persuasively.[6] The adaptation of the minstrel show frame in the novel, however, does not automatically lead to the distortion of Jim's personal character traits, for we cannot say that he is exclusively pictured as ridiculous, inferior, or having weaker intellectual faculties. Moreover, as can be seen from the examples above, Jim proves a worthy rival to Huck in their verbal duels, and he oftentimes turns the situations, originally meant to discredit him, to his own advantage. (In Chapter 2, for instance, Tom plays a trick on Jim, which is later turned by Jim into a great tale of having been bewitched, which he applies to evoke the appreciation and gain the esteem of the other blacks; power relations also visibly shift in the episodes of the fog.)

Huck Finn's minstrel ritual does not result in the stereotyped representation of blacks, although there were many critics who argued so (among them Guy Cardwell, Fredrick Woodard, Donnarae MacCann, etc.). I am inclined to share David L. Smith's views, who affirmed that Twain focuses on "a number of commonplaces associated with 'the Negro' and then systematically dramatizes their inadequacy" (qtd. in Fishkin 81). After all, the burlesque-like closing episodes spell out the bitter conclusion that the years after the Reconstruction merely brought about the parody of the hopes for

[6] Fishkin goes so far in the examination of African American traits in the novel as to state that even Huck's figure contains certain black influences. In Fishkin's reasoning Twain created Huck from the mixture of the personal traits of "a black child named Jimmy, a black teenager named Jerry, and a white child named Tom Blankenship" which, as the critic claimed, "involved a measure of racial alchemy unparalleled in American letters" (80).

freedom for former slaves (Fishkin 74). The relationship between Twain and the minstrel tradition is much more complex than that of any of his contemporaries. The writer in part indicates that given within this tradition is the possibility of freezing the black image into a cliche, but also the subversion of minstrel stereotypes. The consistent maintenance of the minstrel frame, and the presence of the motifs of black folklore therein, the social critique exercised within the adapted minstrel ritual, all prove that Twain identified the minstrel tradition as a mixed (white as well as black; upper as well as lower class; inter-racial), as well as radical (abolitionist) tradition. It is an entirely different matter, however, that by the 1880s, the time of the publication of the novel, out of the inner tensions and ambivalences which governed the shows, primarily not the liberating forces had proved viable with respect to blacks but rather the harmful stereotypes. This is why Ralph Ellison in his analysis of the novel could state: "Twain fitted Jim into the outlines of the minstrel tradition, and it is from behind this stereotype mask that we see Jim's dignity and human capacity—and Twain's complexity—emerge" (60).

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ZSOLT K. VIRÁGOS

THE TWILIGHT ZONE OF MYTH-AND-LITERATURE STUDIES: ANALOGY, ANOMALY, AND INTERTEXTUALITY

Cadmus slays the Dragon and makes Thebes a prosperous city. Oedipus "kills" the Sphinx and the Thebans welcome him as their king. Perseus kills the Gorgon Medusa (as well as the sea-monster), acquires Andromeda and becomes king of Tiryns. Bellerophon kills the Chimaera, becomes a great hero and wins the daughter of Iobates. Heracles destroys several monsters, including the Hydra and the monstrous lion, and after accomplishing the twelve gigantic labors burns himself to death. St. George kills the Dragon and saves a city—and a maiden—in distress.

The analogies are irresistible. All these mythological culture heroes—as well as a profusion of protagonists in the folklore residues of almost every culture, including Hungarian folktales—evoke the monster-killing/heroic-rescue paradigm (with some of them also integrated into city-founding myths). Most of them embody the archetypal task motif: they are sent off on dangerous missions which are bound to finish them off. However, they prove their heroic potential and attain victories against all odds and are rewarded.

On first observation, therefore, subjecting these narrative segments to the same kind of paradigmatic—and archetypal—reading appears more than tempting. Indeed, some of these paradigms are implicated in a special kind of intertextual linkage within the mythological realm: the story of Perseus, for instance, may be read as a prevision of Saint George's slaying of the dragon.

Yet the myths these similar segments are torn from have very different endings and they point to different interpretive options. Of the mythological heroes mentioned above, only two attain a blissful final end. Heracles is received into Olympus as the son of Zeus; Perseus and Andromeda, Ovid reports, live happily ever after. The other four are not so lucky. Unmerited suffering plagues the House of Cadmus, and Cadmus himself is trapped in a pattern that brings him an end which turns out to be far from heroic: he is changed into a snake before dying. Oedipus blinds himself and goes into exile. Bellerophon dies lame and cursed by the gods for his hubris and presumption. St. George's subsequent life brings him much suffering and he dies a martyr's death; the reward is spiritual.

Most of these mythological personages are by now safely embalmed in primordial configurations and they have served as original models for countless analogous incarnations in the subsequent evolution of culture, including the literary culture. The exemplary stories in which they figure have spawned a vast array of archetypal and paradigmatic alternatives, thus generating a whole spate of close cousins in the literatures of the past centuries. The archetypal career of the hero has thus become a formal pattern historically abstracted from the life cycles of mythological prototypes such as Perseus, Bellerophon, Heracles, Jason, Theseus, Meleager, Orpheus, Prometheus, Moses, etc. and has come to serve as a congenial nodal point and time-embalmed receptacle. As such, the paradigm of the hero has become ready to accommodate subsequent archetypal characters, also displaying in the process a gradual shift from the purely mythological to the literary, including, more recently, a new gallery of protagonists in popular culture. This metamorphic transition can be well traced even in a loose and skeletal sequence ranging from Achilles and Aeneas via Beowulf, Arthur and Roland to Hamlet and Ivanhoe down to the "superheroes" of contemporary, often escapist, mass culture. As regards this last, popular cultural, stage within the American frame of reference, it will be instructive to quote from the blurb of Jewett and Lawrence's monographic study on the American monomyth:

> The American monomyth finds Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock of "Star Trek" saving various stellar communities from horrible dangers.

> Superman is perpetually rescuing Metropolis, U.S.A. Buffalo Bill relieves the frontier territory of the Wild West of its threat from aggressive savages. Chief Brody in *Jaws* comes from obscurity to save Amity Island from the shark. Paul Kersey in *Death Wish* and Bufford Pusser in *Walking Tall* become archetypal superheroes singlehandedly purging evil in contemporary America.

In the foreword to the same volume, sci-fi author Isaac Asimov linked the American monomyth to a classical model, the Greek myth of Heracles, offering the following comment to justify the correlation:

> Heracles just happened by,- he came from nowhere. With no thought of personal gain, he made the cause of sympathy and justice his own,. fought the villain, rescued the fair maid, and restored the happiness of the King. Then, scarcely pausing for thanks, he vanished into nowhere. (xiv)

This is a somewhat subjective explanation, and the points of similarity cited would more appropriately describe the Lone Ranger than Heracles. The nature of the justification is, however, symptomatic, and it also problematizes some of the potential advantages and inherent limitations of analogous transactions in intertextual relationships, the central theme of the present discussion.

Before passing to my main theme, however, it should be pointed out that capitalizing on the accumulated results of extensive studies in *Stoffgeschlichte*, *littérature comparée*, *Gestalt*, folklore research, character typology, comparative anthropology, Joseph Campbell's global synthesis, or of a kind of vague and incidental critical fertility, myth-and-literature studies have churned out—and its representative texts are chock-full of—an awesome collection of archetypal characters. Just to cite some of the well-rehearsed configurations, besides the hero archetype we have by now separate niches for *antiheroes* (formerly the hero's hostile opponents; in more recent texts the bungler, the loser, for instance the schlemiel), the Jungian *wise fool* (the jester, Prince Myshkin), the *devil figure* (Satan, Faustus, Hawthorne's Rappaccini), the *outcast* (Cain, Ishmael, the Wandering Jew, the Flying Dutchman, Ethan Brand), the *double* (Poe's William Wilson, Jekyll and Hyde, the Karamazov brothers, Jókay's Baradlay brothers), the *scapegoat* (Adonis, Christ, Hester Prynne, Major

Molineux),[1] the *temptress* (Helen of Troy, Circe, Cleopatra, Delilah, Malamud's Memo in *The Natural*), the *trickster* (Odysseus, Til Eulenspiegel, Falstaff, Iago, Melville's confidence man, Flannery O'Connor's Bible salesman in "Good Country People"), etc.

In these formal abstractions the mythical prototype, whenever there is one, is most often regarded as the ur-character, and the same mechanism appears to apply to other well-rehearsed paradigms, such as the *fertility* myth (where the most commonly accepted fathering text is the Egyptian myth of Osiris, Set and Horus), the *creation* myth (as exemplified, for instance, in the ancient Babylonian myth involving Tiamat and Marduk), the myth of *deliverance* (e.g. the Biblical paradigm involving the ancient Hebrews, the saving acts of Yahweh, and Moses leading his people to freedom through the Red Sea), the *Sky Father↔Earth Mother* dichotomy (as in the first two chapters of Genesis, a larger number of other creation myths, Ovid's "The Four Ages," John Barth's "Night-Sea Journey"), *death and rebirth* (Ovid's story of Orpheus and Eurydice, the Biblical story of Lazarus in John's chapter 11, D. H. Lawrence's "Snake,"), *mating with a mortal* (Ovid's story of Europa in the second book of *Metamorphoses*, the legend of Leda and the Swan), the *search for the father* (from the story of Telemachus in Homer's *The Odyssey* through Sylvia Plath's "Daddy"), the *journey and the quest* (the Biblical story of the Exodus via Allen Tate's "The Mediterranean" through James Joyce's "An Encounter"), the *task* (the exploits of Jason, the Biblical story of Jacob serving Laban for Rachel and Leah, Arthur pulling out Excalibur embedded in stone, Malamud's "The First Seven Years"), the *contest* motif (David versus Goliath, Hector and Achilles, Dimmesdale and Chillingworth, Bartleby and the lawyer), the *fall from innocence to experience* (the fall of Adam and Eve, Henry Fleming in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*), the *initiation* stage of *becoming* (the Biblical prodigal son, Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown," Twain's Huckleberry Finn, Crane's Fleming, Hemingway's Nick Adams, Ellison's nameless-invisible protagonist). Depending on

[1] "To restore life to its first vigor," Vickery argues, "one must expel from the community all evils, afflictions, and sorrows together with those demons, ghosts, witches, and spirits of the dead which give rise to them. From individual attempts to remove personal woes there gradually developed communal endeavors to eradicate the afflictions of an entire people or nation" (*The Literary Impact of* The Golden Bough 60).

the ingenuity of the critic, comparative anthropologist, etc. the list can be continued indefinitely: the *triumph of the underdog*, the *opposable self*, the *glamorized misfit*, *one against the many*, the *pariah/savior*, the *rebel/victim*, etc.

Despite the profusion of these abstracted clichés, there is no definitive list of canonized archetypes, and neither is there a working agreement as to how a thematic cliché or other abstracted formula can make it onto the approved list. Some of the paradigmatic configurations are usually grouped, for convenience, in large thematic clusters such as the cycle of life sequence or designated simply as "archetypal situations." George Polti, J. Matthews reports, classified all story patterns into thirty-six dramatic situations, which he viewed as archetypes (2). The number of discrete items in the Thompson-Aarne motif-index runs into the thousands. At the other end of the spectrum, through his universalizing monomythic construct, Joseph Campbell—organizing in terms of the entire earth—attempted to prove in effect that all the stories of the world are really one story.

As we have seen in our first example, the similarities and differences inherent in the various incarnations of the myth of the hero in mythological narratives in which the particular heroic careers are couched exemplify special issues and problems pertaining to analogy, the intertextual networking of apparently diverse or allegedly kindred plots, and the justification of a paradigmatic reading of texts, either myth(olog)ical or literary. These uncertainties may become especially acute in myth critical transactions premised on the alleged intertextual validity of diverse prefigurative correlations, where the temptation to treat *loose analogy as identity* can be especially strong, not to mention conative impulses in assigning attributes and significances to things not otherwise significant.

In myth-and-literature transactions the triggering agent is *analogy*, which, by definition, is bound to operate within an intertextual networking of texts.[2] Intertextuality (and its satellites: interdependence, interlink, influence, the *ad infinitum* "play of texts," source, residue, etc.) and analogy (together with its satellites: resemblance, sameness, difference, archetype, paradigm, anomaly, etc.) are interrelated within

[2] Indeed, I regard all myth(olog)ical correlations as manifestations of "mandatory" intertextuality.

the same cluster of networking. To see how these latent correspondences are triggered to generate linkage and added meaning, it is necessary to realize that these transactions operate within a structural scheme, which I will call *triangulation* and which will be used here to describe a special relationship between two given intertexts as fixed points connected to the cultural consumer (reader, critic, interpreter, etc.) who actually generates the interlink. Indeed, without the human subject as a perceiving and connecting agent, interlinks are merely latent and dormant possibilities. Which also means that in these transactions the "anxiety of influence" à la Harold Bloom is a perennial factor implicating both author and myth critic, also involving—less directly—the reader. In its larger ramifications of historicity, the very understanding of the myth-and-literature dynamic, which operates within a special process of give-and-take, that is, through the dialectic of continuities and disruptions, is inconceivable outside the intertextual dialogue of texts. Again, in a looser sense, the very idea of how tradition—including the legacy of myth—coalesces and is maintained is fundamentally intertextual.

The demonstration of how the lineage of a given corpus is established, how potential "fathering texts" can be located, and how, in establishing a context or frame of possible linkage, the binding element can be found in structural conventions, culturally related patterns of conduct, or some other constructs of cultural continuity would be the logical extension of the present inquiry. Owing to limitations of space, however, this demonstration will not be elaborated here. Suffice it to say that between two artifacts—thus between texts of ancient myth and subsequent literary works—almost anything can trigger intertextual linkage: a structural device, a plot segment, a literary figure, a character trait, a narrative element, a stylistic feature, a cliché. This last element, the *cliché*, is an especially potent generator of resemblances, particularly if the concept is meant in a structural or thematic sense. Cliché can thus be a synonym for a formal-thematic device of almost any order of magnitude, or it can simply stand for a platitude, a thematic concept, an instance of objectified ethos, a commonplace idea, a simple truth, a fact of life. Emily Dickinson, for instance, wrote 1775 poems, while *refreshing* a mere handful of conventional thematic clichés.

The problem of generating knowledge indirectly through analogy, together with the complex issues of reception and the recipient's freedom to be guided by his or her own preference models of interpretation is one of the twilight zones of literary aesthetic, riddled with parameters and paradoxes that are likely to be both subjectivized and epistemologically "soft." The complex of likeness, criteria of similarity, partial identity, and the nature of conditioning by the *historically changing* dynamic in the acceptance of paradigmatic readings was interestingly described in the preface of E. M. Moseley's study of the Christ archetype:

> I was particularly interested in the Christ archetype in a series of novels quite dissimilar on the surface but basically alike in what they had to say. As I deliberately considered these similarities which I had more or less intuitively discovered, I came to realize that the important point was not so much how these works were alike as how they were different while being alike. My main interest became the variations on the same pattern, variations which I soon related to the changing climate of opinion almost from decade to decade. It is amazing that attitudes and emphases change so rapidly in our time! (vii-viii)

One of the ramifications that is essential to perceive at this point is that in myth-and-literature transactions it is highly questionable to accept the dubious structuralist or poststructuralist premise that there is "nothing outside the text." The epistemological rationale for intertextual linkage is not an impersonal unfolding and recombination of *a priori* and dormant correspondences. Their appearance in the text is a concentrated manifestation of what they represent in the first place, thus it is impossible to abolish the reality behind the text. Doing so, to paraphrase Colin Falck's relevant statement, would be rather like talking about a ballgame without ever actually mentioning the ball.[3] This is one

[3] "The linguistic theories of Saussure and his successors are undeniably based on a correct recognition that 'correspondence,' or 'thing-and-name,' theories of linguistic meaning are philosophically indefensible. But these structuralist and post-structuralist theories seem themselves no less undeniably to be false in so far as they claim that linguistic meanings are a matter only of the relationships which hold between linguistic terms themselves, and that there is therefore, in some (admittedly rather special or arcane) philosophical sense, 'nothing outside the text.' The structuralist or post-structuralist tradition of linguistic—and therefore also literary—meaning in effect *abolishes reality*. To try to talk about literature in the language of structuralist or post-structuralist theory can seem rather

side of the coin. The other is the above-mentioned triangulation process of how intertextual linkage is generated: the oscillation between poles of similarity, partial identity, anomaly, etc. is grasped and sorted out by the externally situated, "extratextual" observer, i.e., the reader, the critic, the cultural consumer whose main epistemological tool in generating meaning is analogical reasoning, which in turn can be both "correct" and "incorrect," likely to be tinged by conative impulses or the simple desire to find meaning that appears to be coherent or simply "satisfying." Hence the enormous creative, but also abusive, potential of analogous combinatory operations.

Thus, analogy, because it is a form of generating indirect knowledge, has privileged epistemological potentials as a tool of choice between rival forms, and also as the structural means of setting up and operating paradigms. It is not by accident that the doctrine of analogy has been a privileged form of cognition and rhetoric in religious dogma for centuries. Neither should it be surprising—although this is almost always ignored—that the creative and enriching potentials of analogy and paradigmatic operations[4] provide the rationale for most intertextual claims.

And hence the enormous responsibility of the "extratextual" perceiver who wields the instrument of analogy as a tool of choice between rival forms. Pinpointing the excesses of compulsive symbol seeking and deep reading has generated a minor industry in what J. C. Furnas has identified as "academic busywork" (520) and what I elsewhere called "interpretive overkill" (Virágos). It is partly understandable that the joy of discovery may prove difficult to contain when the myth critic is involved in practising a strategy of interpretation which is virtually foolproof. "This strategy," Meyer H. Abrams has observed, "to be sure, has a single virtue: it cannot fail" (50). The temptation to offer pregnant surmises and to stimulate new growth of meaning through manipulating the pretentious metaphor, to isolate a pervasive archetype from unintentional myths at the expense of blurring

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like trying to talk about a game of soccer or baseball without ever actually being allowed to mention the ball" (Falck xii).

[4] It might also be useful to consider the theoretical ramifications of the following statement: "Paradoxical as it may seem, paradigms ... make all forms of creativity possible" (Curtis viii).

the actual nature of the text in question is often too strong to resist. It is especially so in the case of large, all-emcompassing paradigms and monomythic abstractions such as the quest-myth. More than three decades ago, G. Hough complained of the one-dimensional practice in myth criticism of seeing characters and events

> as symbolizations of archaic, otherwise inarticulate responses to certain archetypal situations. [...] Characters in fictional works cease to be "just representations of nature" and become embodiments of a few mythical constants. Any young man who dies becomes a dying god, related to Attis, Adonis and Osiris. Any girl who is carried off and comes back again becomes Persephone; and any heroine who is badly treated by one character and rescued by another becomes Andromeda. Anybody who goes looking for anything becomes a participant in the "quest-myth." (142–43)

In a review of John Vickery's *Myth and Literature* T. H. Gaster talks about

> the crucial error of assuming that there are certain basic situations which belong primarily to the realm of myth and ritual, so that when they appear in literature they must be thence derived. [...] Are we to say, for example, that a trip on the subway during the rush hour consciously imitates the archetypal myth of the journey to the netherworld or the perilous ordeal of the initiant? Or is a rape in Central Park an enactment of the Sacred Marriage? No; all that the mytho-critics are really saying, when you boil it down, is that myth, ritual, and literature deal with the same kinds of human situations. Which is scarcely worth saying. (28–29)

In other words, one should be aware of the fact that the system may "leak." Very often, however, especially in myth critical studies, it is precisely the potential leakage that is creatively exploited. Because analogies are adaptable to diverse contexts and because arbitrary and determined features can be equally absorbed in these operations, normative applications can often create distortions, down to the point where analogy even becomes indistinguishable from *anomaly*, a case of obvious deviation from type. And it should be borne in mind that besides being external and elusive, analogies are suggestive and optive, rather than probative, and that paradigms do not create uniform, repeatable instances of *anything* (Curtis viii).

In intertextual correlations, therefore, these linkages will almost always lead to only partial revelations,[5] which in turn can be rhetorically manipulated and offered in critical strategies as fully substantiated. Which also means that an indeterminate number of analogies and paradigmatic claims is bound to possess the attributes of selective validity. To the question "is a lion like a snake?" one can legitimately respond both in the negative and in the affirmative. All depends on [1] whether the chosen criterion of comparison is relevant in the sense that it can be objectively corroborated in the given context; or, [2], on the subjective—and conative—level, whether the initiator of such a preference model can find "adherents" to the proposition, i.e., people sufficiently willing to accept the given criterion as relevant.

Moreover, the dilemma inherent in the acceptance or rejection of analogous propositions has been further compounded by how we interpret two of the prime tenets of postmodern criticism, namely that [1] no text has intrinsic value, and that [2] the cultural consumer, let us say the ideal or hypothetical—i.e., the mentally alert and culturally prepared—reader/interpreter, is far more important than the generator of primary texts. Should we also indiscriminately accept the corollary conclusion that "works of commentary" must now be valued as much, if not more, than "works of art" (qtd. in D'Souza 180) as a general blueprint, we may easily find ourselves in critical deep waters for the simple reason that it may become more than problematic to sort out valid and invalid propositions. We may thus ponder the usefulness of freewheeling associations where, for example, Rostand's Cyrano and Rudolph the reindeer turn out to be, in the critic's fertile moment of epiphany, the incarnations of one and the same archetype. Bert O. States of the University of California is invited to testify:

> Some years ago I had a characteristic "mythic" experience. [...] I was rereading Cyrano de Bergerac, and it suddenly dawned on me that I knew this plot from another source. Here, it seemed to me, were the basic ingredients of the myth of Philoctetes, the Greek warrior who was exiled from the Troy-bound army because of an offensive wound. [...] Following the experience, I began seeing Philoctetes everywhere: in all those tales, for example, which center about ugly people, or ducklings, who are discovered to have

[5] "As anyone knows who has worked with analogies, correspondences are elusive and often lead to only partial revelation" (Abrahams 154).

> beautiful souls and in that broad class of fairy tales and novellas in which frogs are converted to princes and kitchen maids are discovered to be of royal birth or, by virtue of their undeserved hardships, to have attracted the patronage of fairy godmothers: moreover, are not many stories of overcompensation based on just this principle of the gifted pariah: And what of the genre of the moral tale? Consider the story of Rudolph, that lovable Horatio Alger of the reindeer world, whose grotesque electronic nose saves Christmas by piloting Santa's sleigh through the foggy night. (334)

The reader can draw their own conclusions. The fact remains that even conventional critical operations between selected intertexts are likely to produce a problematic residue of meanings and interpretive distortions: reductive categorization, redundant predictability, the misplacing of emphasis. And labeling: Captain Ahab is Satan; Updike's Peter is Prometheus; Steinbeck's Jim Casey is Jesus Christ. Gatsby is Attis; Gatsby is Phaethon. Or rather, he is Heathcliff. And so on and so forth. In these instances, like in hundreds of other demonstrated parallels, the few points of analogous traits are substantially outweighed by the undeniable differences. To use yet another intertextual example, in *The Executioner's Song,* as R. Schleifer has recently shown, Mailer rewrites a "fathering" text, Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (227–41). The intertextual relation is sound in many respects, especially in terms of the two intertexts' thematic paradigm of crime and punishment in America but otherwise the essential difference between the works compared cannot be collapsed without violating the autonomy of the respective counterparts.

How this is gauged and measured remains problematic, primarily because none of the antidotes which one is likely to conjure up off-hand—common sense, sobriety, taste, credibility, etc.—is "objective." Analogical thinking raises apparently innocent questions that have been bothersome ever since the ancients. It is sobering to consider the fact, for instance, that there are no satisfying definitions and criteria of similarity or of partial identity that could be satisfactorily applied in criticism, not even foolproof ways of accounting for and recognizing the presence or absence of likeness. As D. Burrell stated in a study on the role of analogies in philosophical language, "there is no method for assuring proper analogous use" (242), and the claim is certainly descriptive of purposive critical strategies intent on generating

linkage. No amount of regulation could weed out the hazards that follow from the very nature and mechanics of these operations. The best a critic can hope for is being alert and aware of where leakage is likely to occur.

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LEHEL VADON

JOHN ERNST STEINBECK: A HUNGARIAN BIBLIOGRAPHY

The intention of the editor of Eger Journal of American Studies is to launch for a bibliographical series of major American authors in Hungary.

The present bibliography is satisfying to make available for the first time a reasonably complete record of publications—both primary and secondary sources—of John Ernst Steinbeck.

The books in Primary Sources are listed in order of date of first publication in English, followed by the Hungarian translation in chronological arrangement. Selections from the works of Steinbeck and his short stories in Hungarian translations are arranged in order of punblication date in Hungary.

The entries of the Secondary Sources are presented under the names of the authors, listed in alphabetical order. The entries by unknown authors are arranged in chronological order.

Material for this bibliography has been collected from periodicals and newspapers, listed in the book: Vadon Lehel: *Az amerikai irodalom és irodalomtudomány bibliográfiája a magyar időszaki kiadványokban 1990-ig.*

A key to the Hungarian abbreviations and word: évf. = volume, sz. = number, kötet = volume.

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JOHN ERNST STEINBECK (1902–1968)

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Book Reviews

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